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# In Anger and Pity





ROBERT MAGIDOFF

# In Anger and Pity

A  REPORT ON RUSSIA

GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK

DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY, INC., 1949

"THE KREMLIN CALLED ME SPY"  
PUBLISHED AS  
"THE RUSSIANS CALLED ME A SPY"  
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# PART ONE

## The Kremlin Called Me Spy



# Chapter 1

“Will you help me? I need a loan, five thousand rubles.”

The blue-eyed, baby-faced girl said these words and added hurriedly, as if afraid that I might refuse:

“Not just now. In a couple of weeks maybe. My husband and my father have been looking for a house to buy outside of Moscow, and they have found something at last. It’s in bad condition but my father is a good carpenter, and he’ll make it livable before the summer is over. That is why the price is so low, only nineteen thousand rubles. We have fourteen thousand, and there is no one I can go to for the rest.”

“How long do you think it might take you to repay the loan?”

“I already owe you nine hundred rubles, and altogether it will make slightly over eight hundred dollars in American money. Between the three of us, I mean myself, my husband, and father, we can repay the full amount in about a year.”

“I may not be here that long, but I’ll let you have the money. My successor, I am sure, will take over the loan and you can pay him the last installments.”

“How can I thank you, Robert?”

The conversation took place between me and my Moscow secretary, Cecelia Nelson, on Saturday, April 10, 1948, in my office at the Metropole Hotel. Later in the day my wife, Nila, dropped in at the office. I was away and the two girls

drifted into a conversation, in the course of which Cecelia spoke of my promise of a loan and of her gratitude. Her family would be together at last, and the threat of being driven out of her room, which she rented at an exorbitant price, would disappear. She might be able to repay the loan ahead of time, if she held onto her two jobs. (For about a year Don Dallas of Reuter's and I had shared Cecelia's services. She worked mornings for him and afternoons for me.)

The following Monday Cecelia asked me for another favor—a small one, to be sure. She had a very important appointment on Tuesday at five in the afternoon, and she wanted me to let her go an hour ahead of her usual time. I had no objections, and she left a few minutes before five that Tuesday. Noticing how excited and unusually attractive she looked, my assistant, Andrew J. Steiger, and I kidded her about running away from work to a rendezvous with a boy friend. She gave us a sly, smiling look, said good-by, and left.

On Wednesday morning Don Dallas telephoned, inquiring anxiously whether Cecelia happened to be in my office, for she was a full hour overdue, and there were the Russian papers to read. Andy and I assured Don there was nothing hot in the press, but we were all worried since it was completely unlike Cecelia to skip a day's work without warning, and, of course, without good reason. Don's English-speaking Russian chauffeur had called the house and been told that neither she nor her husband, Toik, had showed up that night. At my suggestion, Don sent the chauffeur to the house and he returned with a different story.

Toik, it appeared, had stayed away all night, but Cecelia had come in very late, pale and exhausted, and told her landlady that she had some urgent work to do. She had not seemed worried about her husband's absence, and had not inquired about him. When her landlady got up in the morning, Cecelia had already gone. She did not report at my office that after-

noon. Don and I decided to wait until the next day before making official inquiries.

Early on Thursday, April 15, the phone rang in my Moscow apartment and woke me up.

Groggy, I picked up the receiver. At the other end of the line was Eddy Gilmore, chief of the Moscow Bureau of the Associated Press. His voice sounded tense and hoarse. Without even a "Good morning" he fired at me:

"Bob, have you got a statement to make?"

"Statement? What are you talking about?"

"You mean to say you don't know, or are you stalling?"

"Now listen, Eddy, all I know is that you woke me up yelling for a statement. I'm still half asleep. What's up?"

After a silence:

"Sorry, Robert, but *Izvestia* printed a letter from your secretary this morning, saying you are an American spy."

That woke me up all right.

"How did she put it, Eddy?"

"It's a long and complicated document, and I think you'll get all its implications much better after you read it yourself in the original."

And with that Eddy hung up and rushed off to his typewriter to report the story before any of his competitors could beat him to it.

I started to dress and Nila took my place at the telephone, trying to get someone to send me a copy of *Izvestia* in a great hurry.

And that was how I first learned I was a spy.

This revelation climaxed a week of suspense. Both Nila and I had been shadowed for the past seven days, so we knew that the ax would fall; but it had never occurred to us that the charge would be at one and the same time so ridiculous and so dangerous. In his most inspired moments Alfred Hitchcock could not have dreamed up a more hair-raising situation. But

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that morning Hollywood and its happy endings were several thousand miles and at least one ocean away.

Knowing that the United States ambassador, General Walter Bedell Smith, is at his desk at nine sharp every morning, I called the embassy at nine, and broke the news of my secretary's letter. I asked for an embassy car—not only in order to gain time: I feared that I would be arrested the moment I stepped out of the house, and then I never would get the chance to see the ambassador at all.

He sent his Lincoln for us, with the United States flag flying on the fender, defiant and protective.

When Nila and I arrived at the ambassador's office at Mokhovaya Street opposite the Kremlin, Bedell Smith was calm as usual, and his voice was even, but the ever-ready-for-fun spark in his eyes, which softens his otherwise austere face, was now gone.

He announced in the voice of a man accustomed to obedience that he was taking us immediately to Spasso House, his residence, the resplendent stone mansion of a former tsarist merchant. We were to stay there with him and Mrs. Smith as their guests until he had fought things out with Foreign Minister Molotov and obtained permission for us to leave the Soviet Union.

But Nila and I objected to the plan.

"General," I said, "we are grateful, but we would rather not move to Spasso. I am not guilty of any crime against the Soviet Union, and I don't want even to *seem* to admit any guilt, no matter how indirectly."

Bedell Smith looked me straight in the eyes and said: "Do you realize the chance you are taking?"

"I've lived in Russia for more than twelve years and know only too well," I replied. "But there is a fighting chance, and I'd rather take it. Don't you see, if we moved to Spasso, that would give the Russians just the chance they're looking for,

to say that knowledge of my guilt has forced me to seek refuge. Also the embassy would then be represented as party to the guilt, along with the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, since my secretary claimed in her letter that the company was acting as a go-between for me and the United States War Department via the embassy."

At this point the ambassador called in his Russian experts: Eldridge Durbrow, counselor of the embassy, the toughest man on a job and the gayest at a party; First Secretary Foy Kohler, shy, quiet, and efficient; and First Secretary Frederick Reinhardt, whose knowledge of Russia, and the rest of Europe as well, is rivaled only by his skill on the tennis court.

While the ambassador was busy talking to us the three held their own council of war, and decided that I did have a fighting chance and that I ought to take it. But they were not going to recommend that procedure unless I suggested it myself, and they were relieved when they heard what I had said to the ambassador.

Apparently he himself had secretly hoped that things would turn out as they did, for the spark crept back into his eyes, lighting up his whole face. As an old soldier, he will enjoy a good fight to his dying day, and this looked like the beginning of one.

Still, he made one last attempt to provide some measure of protection for Nila and me, by offering to place an official embassy car at our disposal for as long as we needed it. But we turned that down too. We were going to walk wherever we went from that moment on. Let them arrest us, if they chose to, on the crowded streets of Moscow.

So we left the embassy on foot. I went to my office at the Hotel Metropole, just a few minutes' walk from Mokhovaya, and Nila went to our apartment on Sivtsev Vrazhek, which the resident Americans have translated as "Dogs' Lane," with more regard for truth than philology.

During the short walk I noticed to my astonishment that I was not being followed, and Nila, as soon as she reached the house, telephoned me to say that no one had trailed her. The Russians, it seemed, had shadowed us to verify that I was a spy, but on the day they became so convinced of it as to announce the fact to the whole world they relaxed. . . .

When I entered my office Andy, an American citizen from Pittsburgh, told me that Cecelia had called him up at three that morning to say that she had found out "something bad" about me. She had requested Andy to tell me that she could not work for me any longer. And with this, she hung up. Not knowing that her letter was to appear in *Izvestia* so soon, Andy had not bothered to wake me up at that ungodly hour.

On my desk I found a brief, unsigned note from Cecelia, saying: "Here is the money I borrowed from you six months ago." Enclosed were nine hundred rubles.

Blond, pretty, and small (five feet two), Cecelia Nelson was born Helen Nielson on June 29, 1915, in Newberry, Michigan. She attended elementary school at Stow, and high school at Maynard, both in Massachusetts, and put in two years at Lowell (Massachusetts) Teachers College.

Like many other Finns who were unemployed in the early thirties, her Finnish-born father, a carpenter by trade, emigrated to Soviet Karelia with his family.

Most of the Finns who thus settled in the U.S.S.R. became Soviet citizens, but, unlike the natives, they proved difficult, impatient as they were with the regimentation, bureaucracy, and low standard of living in their new fatherland. Most of them ended up in "places not so far removed," to use the sardonic Russian term for distant Siberia and the Far North.

Among the few who managed to avoid banishment were Cecelia's family, all the members of whom became Soviet citizens. The Russian censor carefully blue-penciled the facts

about my former secretary's citizenship from all news stories dispatched by the foreign correspondents in Moscow. The result was that Soviet readers believe to this day that it was a case of one United States citizen informing against another, and American readers learned the truth only after Ambassador Smith's flat denial that I was spying for the embassy was published in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

In Russia Cecelia married another American-born Finn, Tovio ("Toik," as she called him) Kohonen, a tall, handsome native of Minneapolis, who plays the hottest trombone in Moscow. Like Cecelia, he is a Soviet citizen.

Cecelia had worked as a teacher in a Russian kindergarten, but gradually drifted into the employment of foreigners, attracted by the higher pay and better wartime food rations. At first she was employed as a typist by Maurice Hindus, then Moscow correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*. She was taken over by Edgar Snow of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and later landed a clerical job with the press department of the United States Embassy.

She had the highest recommendations when she approached me for secretarial work in 1944, and I did not hesitate to hire her. Having worked nearly four years side by side with Cecelia, I think her honest, hard-working, and loyal. Her only "vice" was the fact that she happened to be a Soviet citizen, the daughter and the wife of Soviet citizens. This means that when "interested" Soviet authorities ordered her to "find" something on me and help them draft a frame-up letter and then sign it, she had no choice but to do as she was told.

Cecelia could never have written the letter that appeared in *Izvestia* over her signature. The style, the inevitable and hackneyed praise of the Soviet Union, and the smooth marshaling of the material betrayed the hand of someone in the Foreign Office.

<sup>1</sup>For full statement by Ambassador Smith see p. 276.

I cite some of the most important passages of the letter:

Several days ago, while I was alone in Magidoff's office, I began to look for a letter I happened to be in need of, and involuntarily discovered in Magidoff's papers many documents which had not passed through my hands, and which had reached Magidoff through the American Embassy in Moscow.

It is evident from these documents that Magidoff has been systematically receiving from the United States assignments for the collection of espionage information in the U.S.S.R., and that in the McGraw-Hill Publishing House in New York, whose official stationery was used for all these letters, there are some employees who use their employment in that publishing house for purposes of espionage.

In these letters, apart from direct assignments in espionage, there are in some cases even instructions as to how best to make the acquaintance of Soviet persons and best to obtain requisite information.

In a letter from the United States, on McGraw-Hill stationery, dated June 26, 1947, addressed to Magidoff, there are instructions to collect detailed information about underground installations.<sup>2</sup>

She also said that an attached questionnaire inquired as to whether the underground installations were strategically located and whether they could be converted into shelters to protect personnel against poison gases and radioactivity. She likewise cited from a letter of June 25, 1947, charging me with the job of finding out what research is being conducted in the supersecret field of atomic energy. And there was a letter of July 30 which sought information on Soviet air transport.

From copies of reports made by Magidoff which I also discovered in these documents [she wrote], it is evident that he sent his statements of fulfilled assignments not in the usual way, as all correspondents do, but by diplomatic pouch.

Finally, she quoted from a letter I allegedly wrote and sent via the pouch, requesting that the material contained therein

<sup>2</sup>For full text see p. 271.

be used without mention of the Moscow Bureau of McGraw-Hill.

In reply to her accusations, I wrote a statement to the editor of *Izvestia*, with a request that he print it. I also wrote a similar letter to the chief of the Press Department of the Foreign Office, to whom I was accredited as correspondent for the National Broadcasting Company and the McGraw-Hill Publications.

I handed copies of both letters to Moscow's foreign correspondents, all of whom wrote stories on these letters and submitted them to the Soviet censor.

The final score was as follows:

*Izvestia* never published my reply. The chief of the Press Department, to whom I handed my statement later in the day, did not bother to look at it in my presence. On the spur of the moment, before he or any other Foreign Office official even had the chance to read my reply, he told me that I was to leave Russia. Each and every story written by the correspondents on the basis of my statements was killed by the censors, who likewise carefully eliminated all references to those statements in subsequent stories by my Moscow colleagues.

Moreover, as I was leaving the Soviet Union a Russian customs officer took away from me my own copies of the two letters along with whatever other papers, letters, photographs, and books my wife and I had with us. He even requisitioned the copy of *Izvestia* containing my former secretary's charges against me. But I had taken one precaution: while still in Moscow, I mailed copies of my two statements to myself, in care of the National Broadcasting Company in New York. I sent them via the open mail in separate envelopes, and one of them, the copy of my letter addressed to the Chief of the Press Department, finally reached me, proving what the correspondents in Moscow have always suspected, that not all the mail is being censored. It is only spot-checked.

I should like to draw the reader's attention particularly to the following two paragraphs in my reply:

The fact is that in all the twelve years that I have worked in the Soviet Union I have received not a single cable, letter, or communication in any form, whether from McGraw-Hill, N.B.C., or anybody else, except through the open mail. It is true that my mail comes to me addressed care of the United States Embassy, as does the mail of many other American citizens abroad, but all of my mail is sent through regular open channels.

I have never sent any stories out of Moscow, except through the usual censorship channels.<sup>3</sup>

Knowing full well that Cecelia's letter containing serious charges against an accredited foreign correspondent had appeared in the official organ of the Soviet government, *Izvestia*, only with the approval of men of the standing of Molotov and Vishinsky, and was to be followed by predetermined official action, I did not bother to challenge her statements point by point. There is no sense in doing it now, either, in view of the ridiculousness of the charges, but I should like to point out a few details which best illustrate Soviet frame-up methods and the Kremlin's disregard for facts, when such disregard serves their purposes. The analysis may prove useful, since my incident is not the first nor is it the last involving charges against a foreigner residing in the Soviet Union.

The queries referred to by Cecelia were three in a series of routine requests sent by the McGraw-Hill home office in New York to all of its foreign bureaus. Needless to say, they all reached me via the open mail, and furthermore, they were filed along with my other McGraw-Hill correspondence, never kept under lock and key, which explains the ease with which Cecelia "discovered" them.

I had no information on the first two questions, concerning underground installations and atomic research, nor did I have

<sup>3</sup>For the full text of my reply see p. 274.



any legitimate means of obtaining the information desired, since every aspect of such matters, including their application to peacetime industrial production, is considered top secret in Russia. I therefore made no attempt to answer those queries.

Upon my return to the States after my expulsion from Russia, I discovered that Russell F. Anderson, editor of the McGraw-Hill *World News*, had issued a statement to the press, saying that the same assignment was sent to his correspondents in England, France, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Japan, and that they all sent in their respective stories. There was no news from me, said Russ, but he did not press me because he knew of my difficulties in getting stories through Soviet censorship.<sup>4</sup>

Simultaneously William F. Brooks, a vice-president of N.B.C. and head of its newsroom, declared to the American press that I had been the network's correspondent in the Soviet Union since 1941, and he had complete confidence in my integrity as a newsman.

To come back to the queries, there was that third request asking for a story on Soviet air transport. This request was covered fully by the Moscow Bureau of McGraw-Hill under the following circumstances. It reached us several days before the annual Soviet air show, the so-called Aviation Day. On that day the Russian papers are usually full of stories on Soviet aviation, giving abundant material on air transport and the civil air lines, but nothing of consequence on the military aspect of the country's air force.

This fitted in well with the McGraw-Hill request. Since I was busy working on another major feature, Andy plugged away at the mass of the material and wrote, if I remember correctly, a twenty-six-page report which he sent over to the censor. According to the rules in Moscow, each page was signed by the author, in this case by Steiger.

<sup>4</sup>For the full text of this statement see p. 277.

After a few days of deliberation the censor signed the story, stamped each sheet, and returned it to Andy. He immediately forwarded it through the open mail to the New York office, where the sheets with his signature and the censor's stamp are still on file.

The article was so good that it appeared in three McGraw-Hill magazines—with Steiger's by-line.

And I was expelled from Russia for that story!

Another revealing point: Cecelia's letter contained a reference to "instructions as to how best to make the acquaintance of Soviet persons and best to obtain requisite information."

The only case to which this could possibly refer involved the eminent Soviet economist, Eugene Varga, who was recently criticized in Moscow for statements to the effect that the depression is not yet knocking at the door of the United States, that "last mighty citadel of capitalism," and will not for some years. Soon after he voiced that conviction the Institute of World Politics and World Economy, which Varga headed in Moscow, was liquidated. The action was followed by the closing down of Russia's major economic magazine, edited by Varga and called, like his Institute, *World Politics and World Economy*. Instead, a new monthly, *Problems of Economy*, was started. Varga was given a place on the staff, but under editor in chief Professor Ostrovityanov, the Soviet prophet of America's "imminent-plunge-in-the-abyss-of-depression" doctrine.

Although lately the pressure of realities has considerably modified the gloomy Soviet view of the economic prospects in the U.S.A., Varga has not been reinstated in his position as dean of Soviet economists.

At the time his Institute was still in existence, Eugene Varga had written to McGraw-Hill in New York, requesting one of their books. My home office mailed the book to me, with an

accompanying note suggesting that I might want to hand the book to Varga personally, in order to make a good contact, should I be in need of some material from the Institute.

This is a perfectly legitimate procedure, widely practiced throughout the world. And yet, knowing how suspicious Soviet authorities are of direct contact between foreigners and Russian officials, all I did was to send the book to Mr. Varga, with a brief note saying that he might feel free to call on me for further assistance.

Varga never acknowledged the receipt of the book, and I never made any attempt to meet him or anyone else at his Institute.

On that particular morning, however, no one seemed to be interested in such details, least of all the Soviet authorities.

The moment I had my statement written, I telephoned the Press Department of the Soviet Foreign Office, asking to be received by Mr. Vasilenko, the acting chief. I was told he was not in, the usual answer foreign correspondents have been getting for many months whenever they need to see the man whose direct duty it is to listen to correspondents and help them solve their problems as working newsmen.

Twenty minutes later the Press Department called back. Mr. Vasilenko, it appeared, actually did want to see me at 4 P.M. That gave me time to transfer to Andy my office, that small, crowded, sunlit Hotel Metropole room on the fifth floor, in which I had spent the better part of my last year in Moscow. It also gave me time to get to the Foreign Trade Bank to transfer my pound account to London and my dollar account to New York.

When I was ushered in to the huge room of the chief of the Press Department, Mr. Vasilenko got up from behind his desk facing the door and walked halfway across the room to meet me and shake hands with me—a spy!

Vasilenko is a tall, lanky Ukrainian with black hair and

the kindly blue eyes of a scholar. A student of literature and philosophy before he was selected for his tough Foreign Office job, he once told me at a Molotov reception that nothing would make him happier than to be released from it, so he could go back to his books.

Not once did he look me straight in the eye throughout the interview. As a matter of fact, he seemed so embarrassed that, despite the anxiety with which I was waiting for him to speak, I almost felt sorry for him when he was forced under orders to say:

"In the light of the information that has come out of Miss Nelson's letter, the Press Department finds it impossible to continue to permit you to retain your press card, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot allow you to remain in the Soviet Union for more than, let us say, two or three days."

(But every Soviet paper carried next day a brief announcement by the Foreign Office, saying that I had been ordered to leave the Soviet Union "immediately.")

I inquired whether there was any particular route which Press Department wanted me and my wife to take in leaving the Soviet Union. Mr. Vasilenko said any one of the normal routes for foreigners would do but added that he'd rather have us take the plane than go by train.

In the course of the conversation I told him that because my departure would be so abrupt and under such unfavorable circumstances I would be faced with innumerable problems, both big and small, involving my job, office, and apartment. But he reassured me in the most cordial manner that my successor would have no difficulties in taking over and settling the things for which I would have no time. He talked as if it were all a routine case of a departing correspondent handing over his office and apartment to a successor.

At this point I inquired whether I could assume that Steiger would be acceptable to the Press Department as my successor.

Mr. Vasilenko hesitated a moment and suggested that Steiger apply to him in written form to that effect. Andy did so the same afternoon. On Saturday, the day before I was to leave, he was officially informed by the Press Department that he would be allowed "to continue Mr. Magidoff's work[!] and file stories to all his contacts, including the McGraw-Hill Publications."

The first telephone I could reach after I left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was located, amusingly enough, across the street from the dreaded M.V.D. (Ministry of Internal Affairs, formerly N.K.V.D.). I called Nila to tell her that we and our hastily packed suitcases would be going west. We changed our watches to New York time right then and there. And between Moscow time and New York time there is more than a difference of eight hours: there is a difference of two worlds.

## Chapter 2

During my walks to and from the Foreign Trade Bank and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was able to confirm the impression Nila and I had had, when we left the United States Embassy, that no one was shadowing us any longer.

I cannot prove it, but I am absolutely convinced that the business of trailing us for a whole week, during which I assume the powers that be were trying to build up a case against me, was aimed at making us run for shelter to the diplomatic immunity of Spasso House. I can see clearly why the case against me would have been more useful as propaganda if I had tried to seek sanctuary before or after Cecelia's letter was published.

Actually Ambassador Smith invited us twice to come and stay with him—once during the period when we were under surveillance and again after the charge had been made against me by my secretary. The fact is that, of all Americans, the ambassador is the only one constantly followed everywhere by the secret police. Foreigners in Moscow refer to these gentlemen as the Four-Letter Boys or the Y.M.C.A. Boys. Sometimes we spoke of them as the "sunburned Comrades," because, being outdoors most of their working hours, they are among the very first Muscovites to get a good tan in the spring, and their bronzed, well-fed faces stand out in Moscow's pale, careworn, and teeming crowds. These sunburned

Comrades are well-known features on the principal streets of the Soviet capital, for they are stationed at all strategic corners and in front of important buildings including ministries and embassies. An even more vital reason for the presence of the Four-Letter Boys all over the central part of the town is to protect the route from the Kremlin to the suburban homes of the Soviet leaders.

Anyone who has once crossed the busy Arbat Square, the focal point of the route, at the time a bulletproof Packard carrying Stalin, Molotov, or any other Politburo member appears around a corner, will never forget the sight. All traffic lights turn a threatening yellow, and everybody stops in his tracks, watching the car and the bodyguards' cars that follow it, cutting across the square in violation of all traffic regulations. The militiamen and the sunburned Comrades stationed at the corners, at the Arbat subway station and the nearby cinema house, are tense, grim, their eyes roving from car to car, from face to face.

My walks from my apartment to the office and back brought me to the Arbat Square at least twice a day over a period of many years, and I couldn't help seeing the scene many times. And yet each time I could not escape the feeling which seemed to seize everybody on the square that something fatal, something immense and irrevocable, was about to happen. It never did, and one would mumble to himself words about being hysterical, and yet the very next time the feeling would return with all its impact.

One can also recognize the sunburned Comrades by their clothes. They wear no uniforms, of course, but there is always the same black or dark blue cap, the dark blue or dark brown coat in the fall and spring, and the heavy fur-collared dark gray overcoat in winter. They are more difficult to recognize in the summer, when their suits and shirts are as drab as those of most men on Moscow streets.

This rule does not apply to the two plain-clothesmen who are always on the heels of Ambassador Smith. They are probably among the slickest and best-dressed men in the capital, particularly their *zagranichny* (made abroad) raincoats in which they parade self-consciously even when the skies are blue and the sun is shining. Of course, not a single United States ambassador on whom they are keeping a watchful eye has ever tried to corrupt them with gifts, but I know of a number of mutual courtesies, for want of a better word, which are proof that even their stainless-steel Bolshevik souls are gradually corroding under the influence of degenerate capitalist ways.

There was the night, for instance, at Moscow's expensive night club, Aurora, when Mark Ethridge, then in the Soviet capital on a mission as the President's personal representative, was entertaining a group of friends. Averell Harriman, who was then the United States ambassador, and therefore accompanied by his two plain-clothesmen, instructed the headwaiter to serve them, at his expense, everything served to Ethridge's party, "everything but caviar and champagne."

The evening was a memorable occasion for Harriman, for, unless I am mistaken, that night he danced with a Russian girl for the first and only time during his long stay in the U.S.S.R. It all happened with lightning speed. As Harriman danced with Nila, a dashing and bemedaled Red Army officer with a ravishing blonde in his arms suddenly stopped in front of Harriman, clicked his heels, and suggested that they change partners. Nila translated for Harriman. He willingly agreed, and there was Harriman's first normal social contact with the Soviet populace. When the officer who was dancing with Nila found out from her who her partner was, he asked her to introduce him to Harriman at the end of the dance, but soon after that one of Harriman's bodyguards whispered something



into the officer's ears, and he departed hastily, along with his blonde.

Ambassador Smith's bodyguards have never witnessed such romantic scenes, but have been directly subjected to the corrupting influence of his personality, a much warmer one than Harriman's.

One day, on his way to the United States Embassy's country place, Smith noticed that a flat tire was holding up the car that trailed him. He not only waited for it, but sent over his uniformed chauffeur to find out whether the sunburned Comrades needed any help. Not to be outdone, on another occasion his bodyguards graciously consented to take in one of the ambassador's guests when his party was driving to Moscow, and room was needed for someone who turned up unexpectedly.

There is nothing sinister about an ambassador being trailed in the Soviet Union. Bodyguards are unavoidable in the land of the security-conscious Russians. But when plain mortals, even if they possess American passports, as Nila and I do, notice that they are being shadowed constantly and everywhere, they begin to feel uneasy, tense, and, finally, downright frightened.

The first time we became aware that the Y.M.C.A. Boys were trailing us was on Thursday, April 8. I happened to look out of the window, as I was preparing to go to the office that morning, and I noticed a cap and a dark brown coat. "Nila," I said, "someone in our house is being shadowed." We lived in a huge apartment building, which also housed a number of important Soviet officials and three other foreigners, so I didn't pay much attention to the man and left for the office. But Nila, watching him out of the window, noticed him start off a few paces behind me.

He reappeared in front of our building after I returned home for lunch. To make sure, Nila and I went for a walk

after lunch, and he followed us. We separated at a corner. At first he had the right impulse and started after Nila, but then changed his mind and stuck to me. In consequence we got more than we had bargained for. That evening there were two men out on the street, facing our windows. Next morning two girls joined them, and the four stuck to us until the day *Izvestia* carried the news to the world that I was an American spy.

Even though I refused the ambassador's invitation to stay at Spasso House, I was frightened. And I had reason to be.

In the middle of January 1948, I took a flying trip to the States in connection with my father's death. During the brief time I was in New York, I reported to my head offices and received a temporary assignment as European representative of N.B.C. Television, retaining my permanent job as N.B.C.'s Moscow correspondent. John F. Chapman, director of McGraw-Hill *World News*, was happy to hear of this arrangement. He kept me on as chief of his Moscow Bureau and requested from me a series of stories on the economy of the countries I was going to visit.

My new N.B.C. job involved trips during the spring and summer of 1948 to all the Iron Curtain countries, with the object of arranging for a steady supply of local newsreels and documentary films to be shown on N.B.C. Television programs. I had been sending over just such a supply of Soviet films since October 1946. My trips were to involve also a series of broadcasts from the Iron Curtain capitals for N.B.C.'s news programs.

As soon as I returned to Moscow, in the middle of February, I told Mr. Vasilenko of my plans, and he assured me on the spot that the Press Department would co-operate with me fully on the matter of Soviet exit and re-entry visas, since I planned to make three separate trips, returning to the Soviet capital after each of them in order to keep my Moscow office going.

With Vasilenko's co-operation secured, I began to negotiate with film organizations in Poland, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Albania, through their cultural attachés in Moscow. They all reacted quickly and with enthusiasm. The Czechs, Rumanians, and Bulgarians who happened to have some documentary films in their embassies eagerly showed them to me, and some of them I thought of interest to American audiences.

The negotiations speedily came to the point of my making concrete arrangements for the first trip, a tour of central Europe. I had the necessary entry permits stamped on Nila's and my passports, worked out a schedule, set April 2 as the date of departure, and on March 14 I paid another visit to Vasilenko. I told him of the schedule, adding that I was ready to send in our passports for the Soviet visas. He again assured me there would be no difficulties, and suggested that we follow the usual procedure. That involved my sending in the passports to the Visa Section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, simultaneously writing a letter to the Press Department of the Foreign Office, requesting it to intercede on our behalf with the Visa Section.

Next morning I sent my letter to the Press Department and was filling out our visa applications. But Vasilenko's secretary called me, saying there would be a delay.

Something had gone wrong!

I'll probably never know exactly what and how. The only way I can understand it is that, though during our original conversation in February Vasilenko decided on his own that the Press Department would co-operate, he probably had to turn to someone higher up when it came to putting a signature and a stamp on our visas. He also had to report to that someone on the purpose of my trip. And that someone, very possibly First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Vishinsky, did not approve of my roaming the Iron Curtain countries.

I kept pressing for the visas but got nowhere. After two weeks Ambassador Smith, whom I had told of my plans and the subsequent difficulties, began to get worried and suggested official intervention. I refused, knowing full well that even successful United States Embassy action would spell the end of my job in Russia, and in the Iron Curtain countries as well.

Finally, with all schedules off, and plagued by uncertainty, Nila and I noticed that we were being shadowed. The possibility of being picked up in the middle of the night loomed large and real, since, like all other foreign correspondents, I had no diplomatic immunity. I therefore worked out a way of informing the embassy, should the Y.M.C.A. Boys call for me, or for both of us, in the middle of the night.

The cultural attaché of the American Embassy, Melvin Ruggles and his family, lived in the same apartment building, exactly one flight above us. The plan, to which he agreed, was for me to knock on the ceiling, as hard as I could, the moment the Boys tried to get into my apartment. Since I could not reach the ceiling, even if I stood on my bed, I placed next to it one of the crutches I used after I had broken a leg by slipping on the sidewalk one night in late November 1946.

No one called for us in the middle of the night, and the two couples who shadowed us did not molest us. Nor did they make any effort to be unnoticed. They were on our heels almost literally, and on one occasion, when Nila stopped abruptly as she was crossing a street to avoid a speeding auto, the man who followed her was so close behind that he stumbled into her and fell. She helped him to his feet, and he was so embarrassed that he did not even thank her or apologize.

Though the sunburned Comrades did not molest us, they did make things uncomfortable. I had a habit of making regular rounds of Moscow bookstores, in the hope of finding something interesting for a story or as an addition to my sizable library of books on Russian literature and folklore.

New books were few and far between, and I concentrated on the twoscore secondhand bookshops in the capital, managing to visit them every two weeks or so. With my personal affairs suspended, and my mind distracted by the unusual and alarming circumstances, and, above all, by a feeling that it must all lead to the end of my stay in Moscow, I began to make more frequent visits to the stores. The sunburned Comrades faithfully followed me inside, watching my every move.

After all those years the clerks knew me and my interests very well, and would frequently hold books for me. Not wanting to get them into trouble, I made it a point not to get into conversation with the clerks, but one girl at the Writers' Bookshop started talking to me about a book on folklore someone had promised to bring in. To her surprise, I thanked her rather brusquely and moved to another counter. Out of the corner of my eye I could see my friend with the dark brown coat come up and say something to her. I did not hear the words, of course, but the girl turned pale and looked at me with wide-open blue eyes as I turned toward the exit.

A couple of days before the letter appeared, Nila and I saw Maxim Litvinov walking slowly along Kalinin Street near the Kremlin. The newsman in me stirred violently, since nothing had been heard of Litvinov for many months, and here he was walking toward me, aged and haggard but well dressed. He smiled at us and raised his hat in the finest European fashion. I had the feeling that the grand old man of Soviet diplomacy was about to stop and exchange a few words with us. But we recalled the stories about his being removed from all active duty, completely out of favor with the men who shape Soviet foreign policy today, and therefore we hastily returned his greetings and walked on, pretending we did not notice that he had intended to speak to us.

## IN ANGER AND PITY

On another occasion we met on the boulevard near our Dogs' Lane the Russian wife of the then ill Abyssinian chargé d'affaires. We stopped for a minute to inquire about her husband's health. The moment we left her, we noticed that one of our escorts walked up and spoke to her.

## Chapter 3

Now that physical danger no longer seemed imminent, the business of packing twelve years of life into forty-eight hours became of commanding importance, a sad, heartbreaking affair. We had loved our little Moscow apartment, the first Nila and I had had.

There were a living room, which was also my study, a dining room, bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom with running cold water. Theoretically we were supposed to be getting hot water, too, and before the war we did get it once a week, but there had been none since June 1941. We managed all right, with a bath and running hot water at my Metropole office, but the other tenants would warm some water in pails on the gas stove in the kitchen, whenever they wanted to take a bath.

The biggest initial problem was the furnishing of the apartment, which was handed over to us by the Soviet authorities after Markoosha Fischer, author of *My Lives in Russia* and *The Nazarovs*, and her two sons obtained permission to rejoin their husband and father, Louis Fischer, in the States.

In Russia you cannot go to a department store and furnish an apartment practically overnight. It is a long, arduous, and expensive process. You have to import things from abroad, keep a lookout for resident foreigners about to leave Russia for good, and pay regular visits to Moscow's commission shops. They are stores which sell practically anything anyone

wants to get rid of, in order to get some ready cash. The commission shops withhold fifteen per cent for their services.

Nila managed to have fun out of this ordeal. Born in a poor peasant family and having grown up under the stress of the country's industrialization, she delighted in every purchase. In the process of furnishing the apartment I discovered how many things which are necessities to an average American are luxuries to an average Soviet citizen. Everything was Nila's "first": the electric iron, the radio, the refrigerator, the *set* of dishes.

I somehow never got around to buying candleholders, and we never had a meal by candlelight. But when Nila visited the States at the end of 1941 her first great thrill was a dinner at Tree Tops, Connecticut, at the suburban home of Mrs. Earl Barnes, the mother of Joseph Barnes, whom we met in the middle thirties. Nila never got over the beauty of the dining room by candlelight, and when Joe Barnes had dinner with us during a brief postwar trip to Moscow, Nila decorated the table with a magnificent candleholder borrowed with the help of an actor friend from a Moscow theater. The candleholder was used by the theater in the strangling scene in *Othello*.

I was glad Nila never saw the apartment as I found it upon my return from Kubiyshev, whither all correspondents were evacuated in the middle of October 1941. Hitler's Panzers had crashed their way to the distant suburbs of the Soviet capital. The correspondents were allowed to return to Moscow early in May 1942, but I took one look at the apartment and decided to settle down at the Metropole until Nila came back.

Like so many other abandoned wartime Moscow apartments, my place had been looted. Gone was the warm green of the curtains I had brought from Budapest; gone were the blankets, the kitchen utensils, the de luxe editions of the works of Russian classics. I sublet the apartment, retaining the right to move into it again if and when Nila returned.



In anticipation, I kept adding to our household effects whenever the occasion presented itself.

Finally, after long months of waiting, Nila, now an American citizen, received her Soviet visa and came to Moscow in September 1945, bringing with her all sorts of things for the house.

The apartment was thus a going concern at the time of my expulsion and we had to make innumerable small decisions on what to take along and what to leave behind. The Soviet plane to Berlin allowed us a maximum of 100 kilograms of luggage, or 220 pounds. This may sound like a lot, but it didn't to us.

Andy, in his quietly efficient way, was immensely helpful, particularly in agreeing to take over the apartment in toto, with all the furniture, the refrigerator, the radio, the household effects, and the supplies of food and drink, which he was going to split with Don Dallas.

Andy also took another load off my shoulders by agreeing to mail to the States over six hundred of my books, three or four books to a package. My former messenger girl, Shoora, an illiterate and stout peasant woman with more charm than half a dozen Hollywood stars, helped on this. The packages have been coming in steadily, and I now have a fair-sized Russian library in my new home in Louisville, Kentucky.

Our plane was scheduled to leave Sunday morning; the ambassador telephoned on Friday, inviting us to spend our last twenty-four hours in Moscow at Spasso House as the guests of Mrs. Smith and himself. We were touched by the invitation, but I declined, saying that I did not want to give the Russians cause to think even for a moment that I feared them, and was seeking refuge.

But I did accept gratefully an invitation to have our last dinner in Moscow with the Smiths on Saturday night.

An unexpected complication caused us to be late.

As my wife and I were dressing to go to Spasso House, and Andy was busy in my study, two Russian girls came in and announced that they were inspectors of Burobin, a branch of the Foreign Office, whose duty it is to help solve the many perplexing practical problems facing Moscow's foreign residents.

The inspectors lost no time in announcing that by 7 A.M. the next day, just before we were to depart for the airport, I was to have all my belongings removed from the apartment, and the keys handed over to them.

For the first time our resentment reached the boiling point, this episode coming on top of the strain caused by the attention of the sunburned Comrades, the shock of the espionage charge, the tense uncertainty while waiting for the "verdict," and the breaking up of our home.

We especially resented one of the inspectors, a short, dark girl who wore spectacles. She was going about her job with relish, frankly enjoying her task of evicting an American "spy" who had the luxury of a three-room apartment in overcrowded Moscow.

The other, tall and blond, and with a smile that under ordinary circumstances I would have found charming, looked and behaved more like a social worker than a dreaded inspector. She even tried, however ineffectually, to dull the edge of the sharp commands from the bespectacled inspector. But the nature of her job was such that she had to keep echoing, even if halfheartedly, the other girl's demands.

I flatly refused to do their bidding, saying that my successor was taking over the apartment, and Vasilenko had assured me that there would be no difficulties. My statement let loose a torrent of indignation because, as the dark girl said, the Press Department did not manage apartments. That was *their* job! And they would not stand for interference from another

branch of the Foreign Office. They, and they alone, would decide who should take over the apartment. Besides, the house was overrun with termites, and Burobin had been thinking of evicting me anyway!

The final sentence was delivered in the calm, quiet voice of irrevocable triumph, and I knew right there and then that we were licked and Andy would not get the apartment. Even though I admitted defeat, and said so, I refused to remove my belongings on such short notice. It was an impossible job, as I told the inspectors, even in the United States, let alone the Soviet Union.

A long, tormenting argument followed, interrupted several times by the dark girl's telephone calls to her chief for instructions. I must admit that in the course of the argument she displayed some of the generosity of a victor softened by the unconditional surrender of an enemy. We ended up with the following understanding:

I would hand over to them the keys next morning, as originally requested by the inspectors, but my belongings would temporarily remain in the apartment. Since the inspectors, prompted by a feeling of responsibility for things which have a tremendous value in Russian eyes, insisted on a detailed inventory, Andy would meet them at the apartment just before we were to leave for the airport, and, instead of seeing us off, he would make an inventory with their vigilant help. The inspectors made me sign a paper giving Andy complete authority over my belongings, so they could have someone on the spot who was responsible. They also made him sign a paper undertaking to remove all my belongings within two days. But no one knew where to.

As it later turned out, the apartment that he was so eager to inherit, complete with candleholders and egg beaters, became a nightmare which plagued poor Andy for several weeks after my departure.

Of course he never got the apartment, and therefore had no use for most of the objects in it, since he and his wife lived in a small hotel room. He and Don Dallas bought all the food supplies and the liquor, and also the refrigerator, radio, and radio-phonograph.

To find a way of selling the furniture and other household effects, Andy invited an assessor from a commission shop to set the prices. They were so high that the United States Embassy found it could buy nothing, and the British Embassy discovered it could import the same things, brand-new, from Britain at considerably lower cost. The Indian Embassy, then in the process of furnishing a new home, purchased the curtains and one of the trunks.

By that time a whole week had passed, and the Burobin people were indignant over Andy's failure to live up to his written promise to remove everything within two days. He hired a truck and hauled everything to the commission shop, only to discover, contrary to the assessor's assurances, that the store was interested in only five items out of twenty-four. Fortunately the five included the bigger pieces, so that Andy somehow managed to remove the remaining things to the nearby residence of Edmund Stevens of the *Christian Science Monitor*, who, along with all my other colleagues, was considerate and helpful in every way throughout the incident. Finally the objects deposited with Ed were also disposed of, after which it was found that the cost of moving them back and forth, and the damage done to them in the handling, equaled the prices the things commanded. Altogether, however, thanks to Andy's conscientious effort, the loss I sustained was comparatively small. Actually the moment I realized that Andy would not get the apartment I had written off my belongings as a total loss.

Nila was calm and self-possessed throughout those tense last days of ours in Moscow, but the scene with the inspectors

did something to her. The moment they left she broke into tears. When she had recovered we hurried to Spasso House, upset and terribly late for dinner. The graciousness of Ambassador and Mrs. Smith and the good talk and drinks at the dinner table helped us restore our senses of humor.

## Chapter 4

The morning we left Moscow Eddy Gilmore and Walter Cronkite called for us in their cars. After a hasty cup of coffee we bade good-by to Andy, to our red-haired Lyena, who was all tears, and to the inspectors, who violated the good old Russian habit of being late and came ten minutes ahead of time.

At the airport we found Ambassador Smith with his two sunburned Comrades and an unhappy group of diplomats and correspondents who had gathered on that early Sunday morning to see us off.

Here we discovered to our consternation that our tickets were not for the non-stop Moscow-Berlin plane, as I had requested when ordering them from Intourist, the Soviet foreign travel agency, but for the Moscow-Minsk-Berlin plane. It wasn't the loss of an hour that mattered: it was the fact that we would have to land in Soviet territory, where there would be no embassy representatives and no American journalists. This meant that if the Russians decided to play tricks on us there'd be no witnesses and no protection. It also meant that the only witnesses to customs inspection of our luggage would be Soviet citizens. According to Russian rules, customs officers go through the bags at the last landing point prior to leaving Soviet territory.

But it was too late to do anything about it.

The last embrace, the last handshake, and we bade good-by to Moscow.

It was a beautiful morning, but as the plane rose into the air the ground below, not yet awakened to the life of spring, looked dark and forbidding.

We soon discovered that we were the only foreign passengers on the plane. The others were Soviet citizens, most of whom were getting off at Minsk, the capital of the Byelorussian Republic and one of the most war-damaged Russian cities. A great deal of construction is taking place in that city, including the erection of a vast automobile and tractor plant, but from the air one's eyes are captured only by the ugly war wounds left on the body of Minsk.

Upon landing, we were politely ushered into the customs office, a plain bare room decorated by a portrait of Stalin so primitively drawn and colored as to make one think of an enlarged uninviting candy wrapper.

With us came a customs official in a blue uniform, a green-capped Frontier Guards officer, and three Berlin-bound Russians—a bemedaled elderly Soviet colonel and a young naval officer with his wife. From the snatches of conversation I overheard in the plane, I gathered that the naval officer was on his way to an unnamed European port to inspect some ships built for the Soviet Union, and that his wife was allowed to accompany him.

Soviet customs officers are usually very strict with the citizens of their own country and liberal with foreigners. But on this occasion they were extremely thorough with everyone. They started with the Russians, and got through with them quickly because all they had between them were three small suitcases. Having inspected the bags, the officials asked the Russians to empty their pockets, and then frisked them all. The naval couple took it placidly enough, but the colonel became pale and was literally shaking with anger and indigna-

tion. This apparently aroused the suspicions of the customs officer, who intensified his search.

Nothing was found on the Soviet passengers, and the two officials directed their attention to us.

Under normal circumstances it would have taken them from fifteen to twenty minutes to get through with us, but they actually spent one hour and twenty-five minutes. They fingered every inch of clothing, particularly fascinated by the shoulder pads on Nila's dresses, two of which they ripped open. When they stumbled upon a bag of hers that happened to have a mirror with a thick felt lining, they tore the lining out to see if we had something hidden beneath it.

But they had the most fun with my brief case, containing notes, letters, address books, photographs, and Nila's English and French textbooks and writing pads. In the latter Nila had written her exercises and vocabularies with phonetic spelling for hundreds of words and many lines of poetry. The green-capped Frontier Guards officer who took charge of this part of the search was particularly fascinated by Nila's pads. He apparently knew at least the Latin alphabet and probably some German, and inquired with suspicious curiosity about lines that looked something like this:

naʊ ðæt laɪləks ar ɪn blʌm,  
ʃi hæz ə boʊl əv laɪləks ɪn hɜr rum.

Nila patiently explained to him that it was a phonetic transliteration of a passage from T. S. Eliot, which begins with:

*Now that lilacs are in bloom,  
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room.*

The officer demanded a translation and got it, but when we came upon the lines:

*I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas*



we were unable to work out something that would make sense to the officer. With the result that when he came across Nila's favorite monologue from *Hamlet*—"O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!"—he did not even inquire for a translation, but just took away the entire pad.

The long and humiliating process of going over each individual item in the brief case was really unnecessary, since everything was confiscated. The customs official put down a description of each item on a sheet of paper (it took three sheets altogether) which the green-capped officer signed and then asked me to sign.

"We shall forward it all to Moscow," the officer said, "and after a checkup it will all be returned to anyone you may designate there."

I named the United States Embassy or Andrew J. Steiger, but at the time of writing, nearly five months later, my papers have not turned up.

Among the items taken were a copy of *Izvestia* containing Miss Nelson's letter, and copies of my two statements.

The only things out of the brief case they permitted me to keep were a few photographs of Nila and myself. When they came to the photograph of a Russian girl we knew, which by accident had not been destroyed, we both paled. The "interested" authorities must have known that we had stopped seeing the girl and her family many months before, but here was something to remind the Soviet police of their friendship with a "spy." However, Nila said calmly:

"This is a photograph of myself as a young girl."

The officer looked at the blonde in the photo, looked at Nila's dark hair, and was about to say something, when she added:

"I used to bleach my hair, but can't you see those eyes are mine?"

He thought he did, and gave us the photograph, remarking wryly: "You have changed a great deal, you have."

Some of the pictures showed me in a United States war correspondent's uniform, with American Army officers in Iran, and with Marshal Tito in Belgrade. The rest looked innocent enough but he took them all because they were too exotic for him, a creature of the Russian steppes. There was, for instance, a silly photograph, taken in Egypt, of me seated on a camel's back in front of the pyramids, with the Sphinx gleaming disdainfully in the distance.

The officer was particularly curious about the family picture of a friend of ours at the Indian Embassy, showing a group of obviously intelligent and well-to-do Hindus.

"Why are they barefoot and wearing glasses?" he insisted, as if suspecting in the combination some hidden and treacherous threat to his fatherland.

Then he turned his attention to our persons. What his original plan was, I don't know, but he did not search us. All the official with the green cap did was ask me to take off my overcoat so that he could go through all its pockets. Then, suddenly, he said: "That is all."

"May I ask a favor of you?" Nila inquired unexpectedly. "My former French teacher lives in Paris, and I want to look her up. Do you mind if I copy her address?"

He allowed Nila to copy the Paris address of Mademoiselle Annette Doret, and then dutifully recorded the fact in the address book, which he retained. This is probably a good place to retrace our steps a bit and tell the unusual story of the French girl.

We first met Mademoiselle Annette Doret in the Soviet capital in the winter of 1947. Her French and her voice were heavenly music, but one could easily see that the girl was only a shadow of her former self, a shadow strangely bloated by two years of a bread-and-potato diet.

But in the spring of 1945, when her warm black eyes met

the blue eyes of a Russian officer who wandered by chance into the small Parisian restaurant she had recently inherited, she was as good to look at as she was to listen to. At least that was what the officer, a junior member of the Soviet Repatriation Commission, kept telling her from that day on. He convinced her, in his irresistible mixture of bad German and still worse French, that they were meant for each other.

Lieutenant Nikolai Protasov convinced her of many other things—that she should marry him, leave France, and settle down in his home town of Krasnodar, in the northern Caucasus, as soon as he was demobilized.

He also persuaded her to sell her restaurant and whatever other property she had, and convert it all into objects made of gold. Such objects were extremely expensive in postwar Paris, but the couple managed to purchase two watches, two cigarette cases studded with diamonds, and a precious cigarette holder to which he became attached with a sentimentality that rivaled in intensity his passion for her. By selling those objects in Russia, he assured her, they could live gloriously for many years in Krasnodar, the capital of Kuban, that land of milk and honey and of the greatest horsemen and swordsmen of them all—the Kuban Cossacks.

The only thing Annette refused to do was renounce her French citizenship and go to Russia as a citizen of the glorious family of nations known as the Soviet Union. Annette had one answer to all Protasov's arguments: she wanted to see the country first. And she had her way, even though they tried to high-pressure her at the Soviet Embassy in Paris when she applied for her Soviet visa.

Despite his obvious disappointment in her refusal to part with her French passport, Nikolai Protasov remained his sweet charming self, her own wonderful and childlike Kolinka, as he had taught her to call him, all the way from Paris to the Soviet frontier. The moment they crossed it, and were

speeding toward Kuban on Russia's wide-gauge rails, a horrible and incomprehensible change came over him. The several dozen Russian words she had learned slowly and painfully, and which used to delight him no end in her cozy Paris apartment, began to irritate him as he listened to her attempts to make conversation with her neighbors in the railway car. These neighbors kept asking him questions about the *inostranka* (foreign girl) who traveled with him as his wife. He finally ordered her not to talk to anybody, kept her seated beside him, remaining all the time grim and silent himself.

When they reached Krasnodar he made her carry all their bags, and left her in the waiting room of the railway station, saying he was going to telephone to see if his mother was home. He returned after twenty agonizing minutes, and demanded that she hand over her French passport, their marriage certificate, and the statement of the Soviet Embassy in Paris that they were registered there as husband and wife. This she refused to do. And here the terrible, the irrevocable, happened.

Pale and wild-eyed, he stared at her as if he were about to send a dozen bullets into the body he had once loved so dearly. Instead he spoke, and each word stung like a bullet. His mother, he said, had moved to a collective farm not far away, but at home were his old wife and their two children, about whom he had neglected to tell her. And now he had decided to return to his family.

He picked up the three suitcases, containing his clothes and all the objects made of gold, and walked away from her. Stunned, she stood between her two elegant pieces of luggage, weeping and thinking how much like a Richardson novel it all was. A former high school teacher of literature and owner of a restaurant in Paris, she was now abandoned by her dear Kolenka in the middle of wild Kuban.

She did not notice how the women coming in from the farms

with sacks of potatoes and vegetables to sell on the Krasnodar market stopped to look at her with wide-eyed curiosity—no, not at her tears, but at her strange Parisian clothes.

Then a small, elderly woman put her hand on Annette's shoulder and asked her in German whether she could do anything for her. After Annette began to talk, the woman switched to a correct if stilted French. She was teaching at the Krasnodar Foreign Language Institute.

Eagerly Annette told her story, grateful for the warmth and understanding in the old lady's eyes. She was friendly and her voice was gentle, but Annette recoiled in horror when the woman suggested that she go to the local office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the M.V.D. Annette began to suspect some sinister plot and wanted to run away, but she realized there was no choice, and, accompanied by the woman, who acted as interpreter, she went to the M.V.D. "*Vous savez, monsieur, N.K.V.D., mais il était très gentil, avec une petite moustache,*" Annette said to me with fright and admiration in her still beautiful black eyes. "You know the N.K.V.D., but he was so gentle, with a small mustache."

And the M.V.D. man, whether he was touched by her story or by those same black eyes, really proved to be a guardian angel with a mustache. After carefully checking her papers, he secured a hotel room for her, traced her husband in a matter of twenty-four hours, and ordered him to return to Annette.

Instead of keeping her in Krasnodar, Protasov took her to his mother's hut at the collective farm. He left Annette in the care of the old woman, his younger brother and sister, all of whom slept in one room, and returned to his job and family in Krasnodar. From time to time he would drop in to see how she was faring. When she threatened to go to the "petite moustache" again, her Kolenka beat her up in the best tradition of Gorky's and Chekhov's peasants, and threatened to kill

her if she ever dared go to the M.V.D. again. Still stunned and frightened, she kept on living in her new home, where, although she proved to be a good and willing worker, they despised her because she brushed her teeth every night and slept in a shamelessly transparent silk nightgown.

Working in the field, she struck up a friendship with an elderly, lonely spinster who induced her to move in to live with her, and upon whose recommendation Annette was accepted as a member of the collective farm, thus probably becoming the only foreign citizen ever to join a Soviet *kolkhoz*.

Her new friend, Maria Stepanovna, was a good woman, who taught Annette many things about the farm and the ways of the Kuban Cossacks. But she insisted on getting drunk every night, each time recapitulating the story of her own crippled romance many, many years before. At first Annette could not stomach the vile home-brewed vodka Maria Stepanovna kept forcing on her, but gradually took to it.

Many a long month thus passed, Annette digging potatoes, milking cows, drinking vodka, learning the bastard Russian of the Cossacks, and cherishing her memories of the Paris days with a dashing young officer named Nikolai Protasov who had proved to be so much like a villain in an old sentimental novel.

One day Annette rebelled. She walked two miles to the station and took the first train to Krasnodar. She went straight to the office of her guardian angel with the mustache. He looked at her with undisguised horror, because she had changed so much. He began to assure her that he would drag her husband to his office dead or alive and make him take good care of her. But all she wanted was to be sent back home to Paris. Fearing that he might refuse, she threatened to commit suicide and leave a letter addressed to the French government. But he was glad to get rid of her and secured for her a ticket on the next train to Moscow.

After waiting in the Soviet capital for nearly a year, trying to get her exit visa, she was called into the Visa Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. She was told that they had discovered that Protasov had been married before—something she herself had told them the moment she got to Moscow—and therefore she could consider herself as never having been married. She was free to go back to Paris whenever she chose. Annette chose to go immediately, even though by that time she had become very successful in the foreign colony as a teacher of French. She had blossomed out in the gaily artificial life of the colony, where everyone was fond of her except Madame Catroux, the wife of the French ambassador. Madame, who insisted upon being addressed as Madame la Générale, was indignant that a true-born French girl should have fallen so low as to marry a Soviet Russian. To which Annette would reply, her eyes lowered:

*"Mais, Madame la Générale, c'était l'amour."*

Before her departure Annette gave Nila, her favorite pupil, the address of a friend in Paris who would always know how to find her.

It was this address that Nila copied from the address book the Soviet officials took away from her, and which they have not returned.

In the plane, as I was pulling a handkerchief out of my pocket, I discovered a folded sheet of paper, glanced at it, and felt doubly grateful that the Frontier Guards officer had not searched me. On that paper, in the writing of a young Soviet poet, was a strange, bitter, ten-line poem signed by the author:

*Forgotten and buried, I lie in the ground.*

*I shiver with terror under a mound.*

*I shiver because I've begun to decay,*

*Yet fiercer's my hunger for food and for play.*

IN ANGER AND PITY

*Oh, give me, oh, give me, give plenty and more!  
Give hamburgers, tea, give ice cream galore.  
I do not seek passion, I do not seek love.  
Give me marmalade, eggs, and a fried little dove.  
But there is no answer. There is only doom.  
And the heart of the poet is captured by gloom.*

This verse, if written in the States, would sound like something intended for the *New Yorker*. But in Russia today it rings so bitter and true that its discovery could be instrumental in destroying a talented young poet.

At long last the flight ended in a majestic and horrifying glimpse of ruined Berlin, and the reassuring appearance of N.B.C.'s indomitable Ed Haaker. Ed had been waiting for over an hour, and we were soon speeding toward his home.

Only as we crossed from the Soviet to the American sector did we feel, for the first time in three days, that we were out of danger, the masters of our own lives again.



## PART TWO

### Not First Nor Last



## Chapter 5

This mad series of events followed an implacable logic of its own, which may be difficult for Americans to understand, and completely impossible for them to accept, but which is nevertheless very real.

The case involving me was not the first nor was it the last in the series of incidents contrived against foreigners in Moscow.

The series started in the late fall of 1947, when the British military attaché, General Hilton, a skiing enthusiast and a recent arrival in the Soviet capital, was apprehended one afternoon as he walked along the banks of the Moscow River, studying the popular ski sites. He was charged with taking photos of a chemical plant in the neighborhood.

The general insisted that not only did he not know of the existence of such a plant in that area, but also that he had no camera with him. Despite his repeated requests that he be searched, the Russians refused to do so, and they also refused to inspect the contents of his pockets, which he emptied right there and then.

Nevertheless, next morning the Soviet press charged him with the crime of photographing an establishment of military significance. And of course the censor killed all our stories reporting the general's version of the affair.

The Soviet authorities could do nothing to General Hilton, who enjoyed diplomatic immunity as an accredited military

attaché. But to the very day I left Moscow, they continued to pick him up almost every time he took a walk. They'd let him go soon enough, and with apologies, but they kept on apprehending him in the hope that he would leave Moscow in disgust before his time in the Soviet capital was up. This would have given them the opportunity of exploiting his premature departure for propaganda purposes.

But that red-cheeked old man with the slightly protruding clear blue eyes of an amazed child proved to be as tough as the Russians themselves, and took the frequent arrests in his stride.

Then, in January 1948, came the case of a British Embassy Press Section officer, Mr. Samson, who was accused of aiding his Russian secretary in her speculation deals by importing clothes and other consumer goods for her to sell at a big profit. The buxom, attractive secretary was tried and convicted despite her pregnancy at the time, while Mr. Samson was compelled to leave the Soviet Union.

This was followed a month later by the trial of a minor British Embassy employee accused of having infected a Russian girl named Regina with syphilis. The man ran for sanctuary to the premises of the British Embassy. The court tried him *in absentia* and found him guilty. He was sentenced to eighteen months of imprisonment, in addition to a payment of six thousand rubles (seven hundred and fifty dollars at the current diplomatic rate of eight rubles to the dollar). The fine was to be used for special treatment and an improved diet for Regina. Her lawyers asserted that she was the innocent victim of selfless love. The entire trial was conducted in shockingly bad taste, even though the presiding judge looked like a pleasant, dignified spinster.

Human nature being what it is, similar incidents are recorded in the history of diplomatic missions the world over, and recur even in our enlightened and unfettered age. But the

significance of the recent episodes in Moscow lies in the fact that, instead of declaring the allegedly misbehaving embassy staff member *persona non grata*, or at least giving him a fair trial, the foreigner is invariably found guilty. Then the incident is widely publicized by the Russians to further their rampant anti-Western propaganda campaign.

In fairness to the Russians, I must record here at least one incident wherein the foreigners involved were guilty of taking criminal advantage of their diplomatic status. Representatives of foreign nations enjoy diplomatic immunity and are enabled to bring in and take out baggage which is not subject to customs inspection.

On a Saturday morning early in 1948 two duly accredited members of the Argentine Embassy in Moscow were leaving the Soviet capital by plane for Prague. Along with the offices of their embassy, their living quarters were located at the Grand Hotel. The housing shortage to this day compels a number of foreign missions to find shelter in hotels which are inadequate for such purposes, a fact that has found eloquent reflection in many a plaintive, ironic, or angry diplomatic note addressed to Foreign Minister Molotov.

The day before their scheduled take-off, the two Argentinians were busy with the innumerable details of a Moscow departure. These details they solved successfully with the aid of their two Sancho Panzas, young Spaniards who had been evacuated to the Soviet Union during the Spanish Civil War. Their presence in Moscow was not unusual, for since the mid-thirties many Spaniards have been absorbed by Soviet schools and factories, some have been shipped off to places unknown, and the rest, a mere handful, have been biding their time in Moscow working as interpreters and leg men for the Spanish-speaking diplomatic missions.

Finally it was time to start packing, and the two Argentinians spent most of the evening and the early hours of the night

doing so. Each had a large trunk and several suitcases. Much to their annoyance, the hotel manager knocked on their respective doors in the middle of the night, asking to be let in because, he said, there were Russian girls in their rooms. Both South Americans indignantly replied that their rooms were Argentinian soil, and besides, there were no Russian girls with them anyway. One of them added rather heatedly that his pregnant Argentinian wife was with him in his room.

With profuse but unconvincing apologies the manager withdrew, and the process of packing was peacefully completed in time to give the two Argentinians a couple of hours of uneasy sleep.

Next morning they appeared at the airport with their trunks and bags, to discover to their horror that they hadn't taken along enough rubles to pay for excess baggage. After a whispered, excited consultation, they offered to pay in precious American greenbacks at the official rate of 5.30 to the dollar. They'd forgotten that all valuta exchanges in the Soviet Union must take place at the State Bank or by its authorized representatives at Intourist hotels and frontier posts. There was no such representative at the Moscow airport.

The airport authorities suggested that the heavy trunks be shipped via regular train and boat channels, but the Argentinians ruled this out. Finally, after more whispered and excited consultations, it was decided that one of the Argentinians should leave with his trunk and bags—there were enough rubles for that—and the other would follow on the next plane, exactly one week later.

Regretfully he bade good-by to his departing colleague and returned to the Grand Hotel, where he insisted on having his things brought up to his room immediately and in his presence. He tipped the porters lavishly, carefully locked the door, and opened his trunk. Out of it emerged Alfonso, his disheveled, black-eyed Sancho Panza.

"Well," said his boss, after explaining the reason for his failure to leave, "we'll try again next Saturday. In the meantime, here is my passport and the plane ticket. Have my visa extended for a week, and make a reservation on the next plane. I assure you I shall have all the rubles we need."

Alfonso went on his errand but he never came back. The passport, with a renewed visa, and the proper plane ticket were handed to the Argentinian that evening by the hotel administration without explanation. And he tactfully did not ask for any.

The same evening the Argentinian chargé d'affaires—the ambassador was then on a vacation trip to Franco Spain—received a formal note from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, informing him that a Soviet citizen of Spanish origin had been discovered in a trunk belonging to a member of the Argentinian Embassy staff who had left Moscow that morning. The discovery was made at Lwow, the plane's last stop on Soviet soil.

It appeared that those Argentinians, not being diligent readers of American detective stories, had not thought of drilling holes in those trunks. The poor Spaniard had held out for several hours but when he could stand it no longer he had begun to shout and beat against the walls of what was about to become his coffin, just as the plane was nearing Lwow. The noise attracted the attention of the pilot, who investigated and got the trunk out.

On the body of the half-dead Spaniard, Russian green-caps found two brand-new Argentinian passports made out in his name and that of the colleague who had failed to take off. The Lwow authorities probably lost no time in telephoning Moscow, which accounts for the disappearance of Alfonso. The Argentinian was sent back by train to Moscow, where his pregnant wife was in hysterics. The correspondents were in a state of wild excitement which did us no good because the

ensor killed all our stories. Barro, the Argentinian chargé d'affaires, at first denied everything firmly, and later kept assuring everybody just as firmly but more convincingly that the embassy had no hand in the affair and that the passports had been stolen and filled out by the two culprits. In due time they left for the Argentine—without trunks.

The incident was simply made to order for the Russians. But for some unknown reason they failed to exploit it thoroughly. Some evil tongues say that the Argentine Republic threatened to sever diplomatic relations, something the Russians did not cherish after similar actions by Chile and Brazil had left little room for them in South America.

Besides, they really were after United States citizens.

On April 17, 1947, the slim, mustached Armond D. Willis, of Illinois, then director of the United States Information Service in Moscow, gave an interview to Walter Cronkite of the U.P., in which he accused "career Russian-haters" in the United States Embassy of sabotaging his efforts to promote cultural relations with the Soviet Union. As his neighbor—he and his family lived in the apartment above ours—I had frequent talks with Armond and knew him as a God-fearing Presbyterian, possessed of the impetuous indignation and sincerity of a Don Quixote fighting the gigantic windmill of world politics.

I can imagine how surprised Armond would have been if he could have overheard what I did several days after the Russians triumphantly reprinted his statement in all their papers. I was sitting in Vasilenko's antechamber, waiting to be received. Two officials in Foreign Office uniforms, walking along the hall, said to one another as they passed the open door:

"Who is that fellow Willis, anyway?"

"I have looked up his record. He's an experienced old bird of the American Naval Intelligence."

Armond Willis had fifty-two months of wartime duty as an



officer in the United States Navy, including a lengthy period in Naval Intelligence. The Russians not only knew this, but they interpreted his wartime service and Moscow Embassy job as part of a spy's career. To them, his statement, which merely reflected the man's sincere, if misguided, indignation, was but a clever trick to further his career as a spy. I'd give anything to know the reaction of the Russians when they eventually found out that he is now applying his energies toward the advancement of religious education and Christian principles in the United States.

At least Armond turned to his countrymen when he decided to voice his protest.

But the girl who worked in his office, Miss Annabelle Bucar, of Clairton, Pennsylvania, went directly to the Soviets. She decided to break with the United States Embassy and wrote a letter to that effect, printed in the Soviet press on February 27 of this year.

The tall, blond American girl said in her letter: "Reactionary individuals" are "doing their utmost to create dissension and misunderstanding between the American and Soviet peoples." She praised the Russian people as "doing their utmost to make the world a better place to live in." She said she had acquired "a real understanding of the country and its fine people" and that her decision to quit stemmed from this. She added that her decision "has been influenced by the fact that I found my personal happiness here by falling in love with a Russian."

Knowing the way the Russians work, I do not believe for a moment that there was no coercion in her case, the first in which love entered the "cold war" between the two postwar giants. Miss Bucar had come to know a Soviet tenor, Konstantin Lapshin, endowed with winning ways, and not above taking advantage of them.

But there is more than that to her story, as I learned last

May when I had an urgent telephone call from a friend of her father's who wanted some advice. I am not free to discuss the details at the moment, but there is no doubt in my mind that unfair pressure was used in Annabelle's case.

Then came my case, followed by the desertion from the United States Army of Sergeant James M. McMillin, a teletype operator working in the code room of the military attaché's office. I do not think that he resigned from the Army, gave up his United States citizenship, and decided to remain in Russia as a citizen of the U.S.S.R. with the intention of becoming a traitor to his mother country. But now he has placed himself at the mercy of "interested" parties who, if they choose to, will either force him to become a traitor or will cripple him and possibly the Russian girl he loves, both physically and morally.

In a letter published in all Soviet papers over his signature, a letter which, like the letters by my secretary and by Annabelle Bucar, betrays the style of Soviet editorials, Sergeant McMillin attacked the evils of the United States and praised the virtues of the Soviet Union.

The latest case to date involving an American came to public attention on August 19, 1948. According to the Russian press, a thirty-two-year-old United States assistant naval attaché in Moscow, Lieutenant Robert Dreher, had been requested to leave the U.S.S.R. by the Soviet government.

Agents of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs (M.V.D.), according to the *Pravda* report, caught Dreher red-handed as he was receiving secret military information from a Russian customs official, identified only as "E," and described as "an agent of American Naval Intelligence." This man was said to have confessed after he and the handsome American were surprised by the secret police.

The Soviet report alleged that Dreher tried to beat up a

representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and yet admitted his guilt "on the spot."

The State Department's press officer, Michael McDermott, said of the incident:

"In good American lingo, it was a plant."

A most significant aspect of the case is the fact that it was given publicity four months after Dreher left Moscow. The Russians kept quiet about it until the middle of August, when the entire world was aroused by the refusal of Soviet school-teachers Mrs. Oksana Kosenkina, Mikhail Samarin, and his wife to leave the United States and return to their fatherland.

The vindictive mood of the Soviet authorities engendered by the publicity the teachers received the world over, particularly after Kosenkina's sensational plunge for freedom from the Soviet Consulate in New York, compelled Ambassador Smith to expect the worst and be prepared for it.

The hundred or so people comprising the United States Embassy personnel were advised in the middle of August to stay as close to the embassy as possible, and to go in groups of at least three persons whenever venturing into the streets of the Soviet capital.

Among the most worried foreigners in Moscow was Eldridge Durbrow, the counselor of the United States Embassy. He had a tough time trying to prevent his six-year-old son Bruce's patriotism from involving the embassy in a diplomatic incident. The boy would run out into the street to join in a May 1 demonstration, proudly waving the American flag. He would gather old copies of *Time* and *Newsweek* and distribute them to Russian passers-by, much to the consternation of the two policemen and the plain-clothesmen who stand guard in front of the embassy.

"We sing songs about Stalin at school," he said to his father. "Why don't you teach me songs about Truman?"

But even this bastion of American patriotism in Bolshevik

Moscow began to crumble in the face of the onslaught of Soviet propaganda. One day, as the diplomat entered his son's room to read him a story about Washington, he found the boy busy arranging what looked like an exhibition on the life and deeds of Joseph Stalin. There were photographs of Stalin as a boy, Stalin the leader of a workers' demonstration and strike, Stalin in Siberia, Stalin with Lenin. Also slogans coined by Stalin were on display, and finally an inscription: "Thank you, Stalin, for our happy childhood."

"Our teacher told us that our homework for today is to make a Stalin corner in our homes," explained the boy to his stunned father.

Whereas the Americans, as well as other foreigners, tried hard to get their children into Soviet schools, many of them unsuccessfully, the Russians frequently established their own schools in foreign countries. Last summer they abolished them all and brought the children back to Russia in order to protect them from "capitalist contamination."

The daughter of the expelled Soviet consul-general in New York, Yakov Lomakin, went to a regular school in San Francisco when her father was a consul there in 1944. The teacher asked her pupils to draw two flags, the Soviet and the American. Lomakin's daughter was the first to finish. She had drawn only one flag, which at first looked like the American flag, but instead of stars there were forty-eight hammers and sickles.

## Chapter 6

While watching the trial of the Britisher accused in the Regina case I said to Don Dallas, who sat next to me in the courtroom:

"We shall soon be reporting another case, I am sure, but this time it will involve an American and possibly a correspondent."

I was wrong only in using the word "we," for I did not participate in the reporting of that case. I happened to be that American and that correspondent.

The Soviet authorities have always manifested distrust of foreign newsmen working in Moscow. We were the only people in all Russia who ever dared speak our minds on what we thought of the Soviet ways, as well as of the official representatives with whom we had to work. Diplomats are bound hand and foot by protocol, unless they are of the stature of Churchill. Even Churchill would not have called a Soviet official a dungheap, a word which the London *Daily Telegraph's* Alfred Chollerton once threw into the face of Nikolai Palgunov, at that time chief of the Press Department and now head of the Tass News Agency. And surely no ambassador would think of tearing up a Soviet note in the presence of Molotov or Vishinsky, in imitation of C.B.S.'s James Fleming. Usually calm and friendly, Jim once became so enraged at the censor for killing an inoffensive story of his that he tore it into shreds and tossed them into the air.

True, the Soviets punished Jim for it, and in a way which was meant to strike terror to the hearts of all correspondents. Without giving him a hearing, the chief of the Press Department, Apollo Petrov, who had succeeded Palgunov, informed Fleming that he had "insulted an official of the Press Department, in uniform, while carrying out his duties in the building of the Foreign Office of the U.S.S.R." Therefore Fleming was to surrender his press card. This was tantamount to expulsion because without his press card Jim could not broadcast, was not allowed to file even a service message to his office, could not keep his hotel room, or extend his Russian residence permit, and was unable to get food rations and meal tickets at the hotel. (The incident took place in 1944 when food was strictly rationed in the Soviet Union.)

The correspondents could do nothing to help Fleming, although we did put up a fight for him, one of the many battles we fought against the Press Department.

We were not always the losers. On June 1, 1944, we waged a sit-down strike, the memory of which lives to this day among the foreign correspondents in Moscow. On that day we were scheduled to fly to the Ukrainian city of Poltava to cover the first landing of United States superbombers opening the ambitious shuttle-bombing program of the United States Strategic Air Forces. That was to have been an auspicious occasion, the most striking example of Soviet-American co-operation and co-ordinated military effort. Hopes for still closer co-operation were running high then. We who gathered at the Moscow military airport to fly down to Poltava had no way of knowing that our hopes would one day resemble the churned, twisted steel of our proud bombers destroyed in a surprise German attack on the Ukrainian airfields. The Press Department originally invited only four correspondents, but the chief of the American Military Mission in Moscow, Major General John Russell Deane, argued them into inviting twice that number.

The story, however, loomed so large in our eyes that all eighteen Anglo-American correspondents then in the Soviet capital showed up at the airport, all determined to go.

The censor who was to accompany us to the airbase, a young, bright, and impudent fellow named Ockov, was surprised and angered by the display of unity among correspondents usually torn by professional jealousy and rivalry. There was endless arguing and much telephoning by Ockov to his superiors at the Foreign Office, who could not very well afford a diplomatic scandal at that time. Our sit-down strike worked and we all went. But instead of recognizing the reasonableness of our insistence, the Soviet authorities interpreted it as merely another example of the insolence of their Allies.

The main Soviet grudge against the correspondents has always been, of course, the traditional freedom of our profession to report events fully and objectively to the limit of our knowledge and abilities, and to comment on them regardless of whether the powers that be liked or disliked the reports and comments.

It would have been contrary to the traditions of the hospitable Russian people to take it out on the correspondents by subjecting us to physical hardships. The Russians have always considered foreigners living on their soil as guests, and, with the limited amenities at their disposal, they had given us better living facilities and incomparably better food rations than their own people were getting. But the rules of hospitality in Russia do not end when the host makes his guests as comfortable as possible, placing at their disposal the best he possesses. This hospitality also places definite obligations on the guests, making it impolite for them to criticize or disobey the host in any way. There is a characteristic Russian saying to the effect that "a guest does not contradict his host."

Besides, the Bolsheviks are clever enough to know that they cannot force foreign correspondents to mend their ways by

making the physical side of their life in Moscow unpleasant. The Russians know this would get them nowhere, and would only result in more unfavorable publicity.

So they hit us in the only place where it hurts—strict censorship of our copy.

Right now censorship is severe, arbitrary, unfair, frequently contradictory, and no less frequently unintelligent. But such old-timers as Walter Duranty, Joseph Barnes, Henry Shapiro, Alexander Werth, and myself could fill volumes with stories of how lax prewar censorship was. The most startling prewar example that I remember is summed up in the reaction of a Russian censor to a story I had written:

"Why did you send that piece to me? You know I cannot sign it. Now then, I have never seen it. Take it back and telephone it to your office in London or Paris like a good boy."

We all were "good boys" that way, for, fantastic as it now seems, a newsman could send off almost any story by phone in those blissful years and get away with it. Or he could take a ride to the nearest capital and cable a series of stories, no matter how damaging to the Soviet Union, and return to his Moscow post. I still remember Harold Denny's magnificent series on the Great Purge of the late thirties, which he sent with impunity from a western European capital. I recall how during that time, while I was pinch-hitting for the correspondent of the *London News Chronicle*, I received a query from the London office regarding the alleged execution of Professor Otto Schmidt, the famous Arctic explorer.

I found his name in the telephone book (Moscow had a telephone book then, but not now), called, but received no answer. I then called the Great Northern Sea Route Administration, which he headed, and asked for him. A girl told me to wait a moment, and then a man's voice said:

"This is Schmidt talking."



I told him who I was, adding that I wanted to verify a report from abroad that he had been shot. There was a pause.

"Well, I have not been shot."

"Of course," I said brazenly, "but I wonder if you'd mind letting me talk to you and see your world-famous beard, so I can authoritatively deny the report."

He did not mind at all, and within fifteen minutes I was sitting in his study at the Great Northern Sea Route Administration, and he was showing me on a gigantic map the location of the Administration's seven or eight ships stranded for the winter in the Arctic ice pack, which was the supposed cause of Schmidt's alleged execution.

Next morning the *News Chronicle* front-paged the story I had telephoned to them, headlining it: "I Am Not Shot!!—Otto Schmidt." And attached to it was a report of a purge trial in a provincial Soviet town, involving several death sentences, a report that had been returned unsigned by the censor, but which I had dictated over the phone along with the Schmidt story.

I know of only two prewar cases of American correspondents expelled for what the Soviets considered an abuse of the right to telephone stories or to dispatch exposés out of a foreign country. These two were Eugene Lyons of the United Press, who telephoned a story on the Soviet Far East, and John Scott, who mailed from Turkey in the spring of 1941 a series of articles to the *News Chronicle* on the Soviet-Japanese treaty, particularly emphasizing the fraternization of Stalin and the Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka.

Molotov's first act upon replacing Litvinov as Commissar for Foreign Affairs, shortly before the signing of the Soviet-German pact in August 1939, was the abolition of censorship. The honest, objective reporting by most of the correspondents during that period more than offset the unfair advantage some of the newsmen took of the complete freedom to write as they

pleased. But the Kremlin thought differently and, in March 1940, toward the end of the Soviet-Finnish war, censorship returned with a vengeance, giving us a foretaste of what was to come after the war.

The present impossible state of affairs evolved gradually, departing step by step from the comparative liberalism of the wartime period, until censorship became practically "blind." In the summer of 1946 it was separated from the Press Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and began to function under the dreaded Glavlit, the internal Soviet censorship which is responsible only to the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party.

Under the current system of censorship for foreign correspondents, supervised by Omelchenko, a former editor of the trade-union paper *Trud*, the censors never see the newsmen. This eliminates any possibility of fraternization or the chance that the Russians might fall under the influence of the hard-pressing and frequently charming members of our hectic profession, who wax irresistibly eloquent in making a case for a story the censor is about to kill.

The correspondents in Moscow merely send in three copies of their stories to the telegraph building where the censors work. The censors retain one copy for reference, send one to the telegraph for transmission, and return the third copy, with the deleted passages crossed out, to the author. Sometimes the third copy is "lost." I put that word in quotes because it is usually the copy of a vital story that is missing. Whenever a note is attached, requesting the censor not to file a story until the man who has written it has a chance to see his copy and decide whether the deleted passages might not have made it worthless, the censor is obliged to keep the story from being telegraphed. That is, in principle. But somehow, time and again, he "forgets to wait" and sends off a mutilated copy that either says nothing or, in extreme cases, conveys meanings

directly opposite to the intention of the newsman who wrote it.

One day in reporting to N.B.C. a particularly malicious attack on the United States by the Soviet government organ *Izvestia*, I attached a note asking the censor not to file the story until I had seen it. He "forgot" to wait, and cabled it. I turned white with rage when I finally saw what the censor had done to my report of the *Izvestia* article. Every reference to the paper, the article, or the article's author had been crossed out, so what the news desk received was an infamous denunciation of the United States by an American correspondent! The experienced men on the desk in New York smelled a rat immediately, and used the story with the proper references reinstated. They worked these out from a teletyped report on the same article by an American agency correspondent in Moscow who apparently hit on a censor who somehow failed to delete the references to *Izvestia*.

A frequent and irritating cause of delay and the deletion of innocent passages is occasioned by the censors' insufficient knowledge of English. They would assume the word "dyes" was "dies," whereupon a whole sentence or even paragraph would die at their hands. They would be misled by the fact that "execution" does not mean the same thing as the Russian word *executsia*, or corporal punishment. Or by the fact that *dislocatsia* is used in Russian only in the sense of deployment of troops or artillery, but never in the sense of dislocation of the jaw. In reporting the award of the 1948 Stalin Prizes for literature and the arts, just before my expulsion, I spoke of the coveted prize. The word "coveted" was deleted. In checking with the English-Russian dictionary, I discovered that it translated the meaning of "coveted" only as "covetous," but not as "desirable," whereas both the Webster's and Funk and Wagnall's dictionaries, which I had on my desk, gave both meanings. It was too late to reinstate the word, so I cooled my anger

in an icily polite letter addressed to "My dear Censor," giving him a lesson in philology for which, I am sure, I earned his undying hatred.

One of the reasons the Soviet censors mangle cabled stories is their fear of double-talk, the best examples of which have been rattled off on Drew Middleton's typewriter and printed in the *New York Times*. I suspect the failure of the Russians to give him a return visa could be traced to this double-talk, which misled the censors, and for which one or two of them might have paid with their jobs, if not their liberty.

The radio correspondents were in a tougher spot than the agency and newspaper correspondents, because our broadcasts were subject to double censorship, the regular one and the one set up by the Radio Committees.

One way of getting around the censor was to read a dispatch as it was mangled by the censor, with his deletions making the entire piece sound as if it were written by a moron. The trouble with this method was that the radio listeners in the States would more often than not attribute the distortions to technical difficulties or to slovenly writing.

Another, and much more effective way, was to resort to voice inflections conveying satire, an art in which Richard Hottelet of C.B.S. was an outstanding master.

Moscow correspondents suspect that the inability of the censors to cope with this practice caused the Soviet authorities to ban all broadcasts by foreign radio commentators in the late fall of 1946. As a result, C.B.S. closed down its office completely, but N.B.C. retained me in Moscow, falling back on my cabled reports for their news service.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Russians would have been getting a better press abroad if they had been wise enough to abolish censorship. I know of many cases where correspondents withdraw stories containing on the whole favorable comment on an action or decree by the Soviet government,

simply because the censor insisted on deleting the slightest criticism.

A good recent example is provided by the currency reform in December 1947. In reporting that story in a major feature for the McGraw-Hill Publications, I stressed the beneficial effect the reform was certain to have on the standard of living of the Soviet population—a prophecy which later events have justified, although the progress has been slow. But I felt it my duty also to make it clear that the reform simultaneously robbed a major section of the population of most of its savings. The point is that all the cash on hand was exchanged at the rate of ten old rubles for one new one, in a country where inhabitants usually keep their savings in “the sock” rather than in a bank.

The censor deleted every reference to “the substantial loss of savings,” as I politely termed the confiscation of the old rubles, whereupon I withdrew the entire story, leaving it to the New York office of McGraw-Hill to concoct a report of its own, on the basis of agency material and particularly the Voice of America broadcasts, which told the full story. The result was a report emphasizing the negative aspect of the currency reform, which was inevitable, since New York, with the best intentions in the world, could not predict an improvement in the Soviet standard of living with as much confidence and authority as I could from Moscow.

Admittedly the “authority” and “confidence,” which I shared with my Moscow colleagues, was usually based on such shaky ground that the words have for me an ironic flavor. The language barrier, which is formidable as far as the majority of foreigners in the Soviet capital is concerned, is mere child’s play compared to the barrier of fear and suspicion. The Kremlin has built this by pounding into the heads of the Russians that they are surrounded by a hostile and scheming world under the leadership of the United States. This fear and sus-

picion make it impossible for foreigners to strike up friendships with Russians, and for newsmen to make "contacts." Those of us who ever had friends and contacts have lost them all since the end of the war.

The "State Secrets" decree of June 4, 1947, made the disclosure of information concerning industry, agriculture, finance, trade, and transport, as well as any "other information which will be recognized by the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers as not subject to disclosure," an act of treason or espionage punishable by confinement in slave labor camps (the Kremlin calls them "corrective" camps) for terms varying from ten to twenty years.

In January 1948 the Soviet cabinet issued another decree forbidding all Soviet citizens to have any dealings with foreigners, except with the blessings of the Foreign Office or the Ministry for Foreign Trade. At the same time the Kremlin launched a purge among the Russian personnel working for the United States Embassy and the foreign correspondents. I know of at least seven cases of arrest or unexplained disappearance of American Embassy-employed secretaries, cooks, chauffeurs, and interpreters, and one United States correspondent's secretary, all of which took place during the last three months of my stay in Moscow.

The above measures make the isolation of foreigners in Russia practically airtight. Each and every one of them lives in an artificially created ghetto called the foreign colony.

The entire situation is reflected even in the remarks of the children. Take the case of a Moscow boy in his early teens whose father, a foreigner, is estranged from the boy's mother. The boy's name is unmistakably Anglo-Saxon, something which in the middle thirties would have caused the boy to be an object of envy and curiosity among his schoolmates. But now they taunt him. Heartbroken, he said to his mother: "Why does everybody have a real father, but mine is a foreigner?"

The correspondents are the only ones in a position to rebel or at least to voice their protest. And they do. But this only intensifies the hatred and suspicion of them on the part of the Soviet authorities.

Here is another example of the practically complete breakdown of communications between the two worlds. I have been interested for years in folklore, particularly in the folk tales and legends which have sprung up in Russia since the Revolution, and have tried to keep in touch with the field ever since I went to Moscow. The January law made it impossible for me to visit a public library without the interference of the Press Department. I asked the department to obtain entrance for me to any library that had books on the subject, for those I had tried invariably answered that they could not let me take advantage of their facilities unless they received specific instructions from the Foreign Office. After nine weeks of petitioning I finally had to give up. The Press Department used the favorite method of saying neither yes nor no, but of doing nothing about the request.

There seems to be no prospect for the abolition of Soviet censorship in the foreseeable future. Stalin himself said so to Harold Stassen during the latter's Moscow visit in the spring of 1947.

In the final analysis, Soviet censorship defeats its own purpose. It provides no soil on which good writing, in the once-upon-a-time style of Walter Duranty, Harold Denny, or Louis Fischer, can flourish. It reduces working foreign correspondents in the Russian capital to a state of impotent frustration. Finally, it breeds a constant flow of angry books and articles by men like Eugene Lyons, Louis Fischer, Brooks Atkinson, and Alexander Kendrick, all of whom were willing in their time to give the Russians every benefit of the doubt.

I am convinced that every correspondent who has been or is to go to the Soviet Union will follow the pattern of those

mentioned above, as long as the Kremlin insists on its idiotic and suicidal censorship. It is only a matter of time, because fear of hurting a Russian friend or of not receiving a return visa silences a correspondent only temporarily.

After my case, it is obvious that correspondents in Russia must now worry about trumped-up charges and subsequent punishment, and they do. But punishment for the next victim may be more severe than mere expulsion, particularly after the Kosenkina-Samarin affair and the expulsion from the United States of the Soviet Consul General Yakov Lomakin.

The correspondents in Moscow are well aware of their danger. I clearly recall that when my colleagues gathered in my office for a press conference after my strange interview with Mr. Vasilenko they were a worried-looking lot. They were probably more worried than I was, for I already knew what lay ahead of me—mere expulsion—whereas, they—well, it seemed to me I could plainly read in their eyes the troublesome question: "Am I next?"



## Chapter 7

The reader who follows his daily paper diligently will have no difficulty in surmising why in my sad prophecy as to the victim of the next incident I spoke of an American with even greater certainty than of a correspondent. Hardly a day has passed for two years now without a violent anti-American blast in *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, or the *Literary Gazette*.

All the heavy and light guns of propaganda have been let loose in this relentless campaign. The press, radio, literature, drama, films, even the vaudeville and the circus keep deriding the American way of life and thought as corrupt, decadent, and predatory.

Our statesmen are "hirelings of Wall Street"; the workers wear the chains of insecurity and slavery; the Negro minority has never really been freed from those chains; our literature is a quagmire of decay and sexual perversion; Hollywood is merely a school for depravity and gangsterism; the New Look is a sign of a civilization on its way out; American technology—for generations an object of eloquent admiration—is slipping and, besides, the vile Yankees have stolen no end of inventions and methods from the Russians; and—the final straw, the immortal accusation, the death sentence—American architecture is no good because . . . the Empire State Building is swaying in the wind! Whereas Russian architects (who, incidentally, have not yet erected a single skyscraper) are

going to build the tallest, the most beautiful, the most perfect skyscrapers that will not sway drunkenly in the wind like degenerate aristocrats.

In foreign affairs the Kremlin represents the United States as the big bad wolf of the postwar world, gnashing its atomic teeth and devouring little pigs in the form of smaller countries. And Washington is preparing to resurrect German and Japanese aggression to be carefully directed against the peace-loving Soviet Union and the new democracies.

Unfortunately the mistakes in America's postwar foreign policy expose it to propaganda exploitation by the Kremlin. These mistakes arouse the worst suspicions of our natural allies, the democratic and liberal forces the world over. Sometimes they take the form of inconsistency and vacillation, such as in the case of Palestine. Sometimes they are a result of an all too consistent effort to preserve the impossible *status quo* in countries where national and social revolutions have become as pressing and as inevitable as the American Declaration of Independence. This revolutionary process has everywhere been speeded up by America's example, its championship of freedom, and its industrial revolution. Even if we sometimes forget, the people of China, Indonesia, Greece, and, indeed, millions of people in the Soviet-controlled Balkans and in Russia itself remember clearly Wilson's words:

"We are fighting for the oppressed nationalities who, submerged or standing alone, could never have secured their freedom. . . . We say now that all these people have the right to live their own lives under governments which they themselves choose to set up. That is the American principle."

The "forgetfulness" of our foreign policy as revealed by its mistakes gives sustenance to the Communist elements in the countries involved, providing the heaven-sent opportunity to seize, control, and direct national revolutions. Russia and not the United States becomes identified in the eyes of millions

with freedom, although the United States has a far greater right to that identification.

This fundamental weakness of American foreign policy helps the Kremlin to camouflage the mainspring of their hate-America campaign: the fact that only the strength and firmness of the United States stand between the Soviet Union and complete domination of the globe. This exasperates the men in the Kremlin who are fanatical in their belief that, "in our age, all roads lead to Communism," to borrow a phrase from Molotov. And Communism to the Russians and to their followers the world over is synonymous with the Soviet system as it has evolved in Stalin's own one sixth of the world.

Despite the failure of the United States to support in all too many instances the liberal forces of the post-war world in their efforts to create a truly democratic order, the faith-inspiring vitality of American democracy, the high standard of living in the United States, and the Lend-Lease and E.R.P. generosity of the American people constitute the most potent force in the global "cold war" of today.

So potent is this force that it exerts its influence over the Russian people even now, although its impact has been modified by the iron curtain erected by the Kremlin. The ever-growing intensity of the hate-America campaign is in itself a most eloquent tribute to the potency of that influence, as is the consistently growing popularity of the Voice of America programs. The basic aim of this propaganda is to destroy the legend of America among the Russians, to shatter their dream of the "Life Beautiful" as America has evolved it. They are trying to undermine Russian reliance on the good faith of the U.S.A., to arouse and keep alive suspicions of American designs upon the sovereignty of other nations, and to ridicule the very thought that American civilization is in any way worthy of imitation, admiration, or even plain respect.

The Kremlin effort in this field is the more concentrated and heavy-handed because, in all its history, Soviet propaganda never undertook a more difficult and thankless task. Ironically enough, Bolshevik propaganda never defiled Nazi Germany with as much violence as it is presently defiling Russia's wartime Ally, the United States. One can clearly see why. The Russian people had every reason to hate Hitler and his cruel, trigger-happy army of occupation, but no nation ever enjoyed such consistent love and admiration on the part of generations of Russians as the American nation. No matter how loud the torrent of official Soviet denunciation of "corrupt and decadent" U.S.A., it has been unable to drown this affection even after two years of effort.

Clinging to the legend of the "Life Beautiful" in "that great country beyond the ocean," the people of the Soviet Union are offering a powerful, if passive, resistance to the hate-America campaign. Almost in defiance of it, they continue to admire Americans for their prowess in industry, for their keen sense of humor, for their earthy political democracy, as well as for the delightful and bewildering democracy of their everyday behavior. I said bewildering because, their Communist principles notwithstanding, the Russians are most undemocratically conscious of rank and protocol.

There seems to be something in the make-up of both nations that makes Americans and Russians affectionately understand each other whenever they come into direct non-official contact. U. S. Army boys, whether from Texas, Nebraska, or Wisconsin, who during the war were stationed at the American air bases in the Ukraine, kept telling me how much more at home they felt with the Russians, both civilians and military, than with the British, despite the language barrier.

The Russians have felt similarly about Americans, and have given eloquent expression to that feeling. Characteristic testimony comes from the poet Ilya Selvinsky, who in discuss-

ing American writers shortly before the end of the war said of them:

"They have sprung from the soil of America and are deeply rooted in it. But, having grown out of America, and having listened to the world around them, they caught the sound of a kindred voice. It came from Russia, so distant and seemingly alien."

But now all talk of kinship is taboo, and every acknowledgment of indebtedness is considered a crime against the Soviet state, a crime for which there are such subtle labels as "cringing before things foreign" or "kowtowing to the decadent West." There is also punishment for the crime, ranging from public criticism to loss of job with all the sinister consequences involved. The "liberation of those of our backward citizens who still suffer from the disease of fawning before things foreign" is one of the avowed aims of Soviet propaganda today. Soviet civilization, thus runs the line, has reached such heights of perfection and maturity that "now there exist all the possibilities for the complete liquidation of a most harmful residue in the consciousness of certain citizens of the U.S.S.R.—subservience to the West."

Many a Soviet scientist, writer, theatrical and film producer has been given harsh medicine to rid him of the "kowtowing disease." Even the Russian humor magazine *Crocodile* did not escape criticism and a drastic reorganization of its editorial staff, which has been instructed to "battle the vestiges of capitalism in the consciousness of the people. . . . Subject to criticism the bourgeois culture of the West, showing its ideological insignificance and decay."

Some ardent citizens have gone so far in pursuing the campaign as to declare war against foreign words that have become a part of the Russian language. Thus *éclairs* should be called *éclairs* no longer, and sandwiches should no longer be known as "sandwiches." Also names of hotels, such as

Astoria, Metropole, or Continental, should be replaced with purely Russian names. In the words of the author of an *Izvestia* article, P. Bedrosova, "it is high time to stop insulting the work of Soviet laborers, engineers, and scientists by pasting foreign labels on home production."

The Kremlin goes even further than that. It claims as "home production" many an invention universally recognized as originating in a state other than Russia. A host of Soviet experts is now in the process of reconsidering the whole history of world science and technology, and is giving the Russians priority over a vast field of discovery and invention. Up to now they have claimed as original Russian inventions the following:

radio	oil tanker
synthetic rubber	turbodrill
steam engine	reflecting telescope
locomotive	submarine
airplane	penicillin
electric light	coal-cutting combine
transformer	caterpillar tractor
electric arc welding	harvester combine
spinning jenny	hydraulic monitor
aniline dyes	adding machine
cupola furnace	weather-forecast method

Moreover, it is pointed out that the entire wheat culture of the United States and Canada is based on wheat types of Russian origin. Thus Russian wheat saved America. And the alfalfa most generally used in the United States and the best American apples originally came from Russia. They even claim to be the first discoverers of America, from across the Bering Sea.

These boasts are part and parcel of the Kremlin effort to build up a superiority complex among the Russians, or, to use the glorified Soviet phrase for it, to build up the cult of the Soviet Man. Just as in the case of the anti-West and anti-

American lines, the fields of art are mobilized to achieve that purpose. The writers are harangued into writing stories, and playwrights and film producers into creating plays and movies, glorifying the Soviet Man, his moral superiority, his courage, honesty, and other virtues that would dwarf the Capitalist Man into degenerate insignificance.

Cultural exchange between the Soviet Union and Western democracies has thus been reduced to nothing. Every effort from the outside to effect such an exchange has been thwarted by the Kremlin.

A good example is provided by the ill-fated trip to Moscow of Professor Ernest J. Simmons in the summer of 1947. One of America's outstanding scholars of Russian history and literature, head of the Slavic Department at Columbia University and chairman of the board of its Russian Institute, Professor Simmons went to Russia on behalf of the American Council of Learned Sciences and had the financial backing of the Rockefeller Foundation. He came with a series of constructive projects for the exchange of students, teachers, publications, even whole libraries.

Astute and levelheaded Simmons had no illusions about Moscow, but even he was not prepared for the reception he got. He was cold-shouldered at every point of attempted contact, from the Foreign Office and V.O.K.S. (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) down to the Moscow University and the Lenin Library, which is the greatest library in Russia and one of the largest in the world.

No sooner had he left the country than the Soviet press attacked Columbia University's Russian Institute as a school for spies, and its head, Geroid Robinson, as a "seasoned agent." The press also assaulted Simmons as a pseudo scholar and his latest work, the book which has been hailed by American reviewers as the definitive biography of Leo Tolstoy, as cheap, vulgar, and devoid of any value whatsoever.

Fearful of the possible influence of bourgeois culture on Soviet citizens, the Kremlin is employing the strategy of cowardice by effecting a complete breakdown of cultural relations with foreign countries. The only exception is, of course, contact with the "countries of new democracy." But here it is all a one-way street. Paying lip service to the cultural achievements of these countries, Moscow is simultaneously forcing its own values and conceptions down their throats. These countries get an ocean of pro-Soviet, anti-West propaganda and tiny streamlets of values of permanent cultural or scientific significance.

There is an internal aspect of the cold war that is of even greater potential import than the foreign aspect.

Ever since the invasion of the U.S.S.R. by Hitler, the Kremlin has been forced to wage a struggle for the minds and souls of the Russians. The initial stages of the war against the aggressor brought many a shock to the Politburo, in addition to military defeats.

Despite nearly twenty-five years of Bolshevik sway, the Politburo discovered soon after the outbreak of the war that the Soviet people responded to the call for the defense of Mother Russia with greater self-sacrifice than to appeals to fight in the name of Communism. Stalin himself confessed this to Harry Hopkins with bitter frankness. The entire Kremlin-directed wartime propaganda was a public admission of this problem.

Along with nationalism, religion proved to be strong and even dominant in the hearts of millions of Soviet citizens. In the hour of trial, tragedy, and death, they turned for succor and strength to the Holy Trinity rather than to Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. They turned to the Bible and not to Stalin's *Leninism* or the *History of the Communist Party*. The Kremlin



had to swallow its pride and principles and make peace and an alliance with the Church, not without some gentle prodding from President Roosevelt.

I do not want to minimize the magnificent part the Communist Party played in achieving Russia's victory, or discount the devotion, courage, and discipline of its members. As a matter of fact, the cementing quality of Communist discipline helped enormously in holding the front and rear together during the years of the gravest defeats and superhuman exertion, but discipline alone could not have stemmed the Nazi tide.

By entering into a wartime alliance with Russian patriotism and with religion, and by holding before the eyes of the weary Soviet people visions of a happy, peaceful, and abundant post-war life, the Kremlin achieved unity. This unity began to show cracks with the end of the war. The Soviet people had to be won all over again. Not that there is active opposition or organized resistance to the Soviet regime. The ruling Communist Party and its all-embracing secret police have seen to that. But there is a questioning and a doubt among the people, particularly among the war veterans, and the Party is straining its entire propaganda machine to answer the questions and dispel the doubts. Where is the promised postwar paradise? Where are the rest and the abundance? And why is there a renewed fear of war which overshadows the joy of living?

The worst are the young men of the army. Thousands of them have been deserting to the British and American zones in Germany and Austria where tens of thousands of D.P.s refused irrevocably to return to the Soviet Union. The millions who have come back have been demobilized and rendered harmless, since there are no veterans' organizations in the Soviet Union, and the young men have been absorbed by the various communities in vast Russia. But memories linger. And the stories of Western ways of life these boys have returned with have had their impact.

At first, seeing the comparative abundance, cleanliness, and the "cultured" ways abroad, Red Army boys thought it was some mistake. There is the pathetic story of a unit which had fought its way into the suburbs of a German town and, seeing beautiful homes and well-tended gardens, thought they had captured a suburb occupied by rich capitalists; they started to loot and plunder. But they soon discovered to their bewilderment that it actually was a working-class district.

To be sure, the soldiers began the conquest of Germany as rabid agitators for Soviet ways, although many of them were not above looting. All Russia was once laughing at the story of the Red Army man who stopped a German and demanded a watch from him. "But I have no watch," the man said. "I never could afford one." Whereupon the Russian soldier took a watch out of his bulging pocket and gave it to the man, saying: "Take it, you victim of capitalism, and bless the Soviet power." Another story in an even bitterer vein involves a Russian soldier who tried to force a German girl to go to bed with him. When she saw she was fighting a losing battle, she used what seemed to her the final, irrefutable argument. "But I am Jewish," she explained. "And you certainly would not want to have anything to do with a filthy Jewess." The soldier gave her a stern and lengthy lecture on the Soviet Constitution, which recognizes all races and nationalities as equal. Then he raped the girl.

But soon even lip service to the glories of the Soviet fatherland was abandoned. Drastic disciplinary measures and replacements of whole armies followed. Held in check and confined to their barracks, the Red Army is now a respectable army of occupation. But its officers and men can see and hear. The question comes up again and again: Why is Russia in such a bad way, and why do things improve at such a slow pace?

The Kremlin has a ready reply: It is the evil workings of predatory, imperialistic America.

A question I shall probably never be able to answer fully is why I was chosen as the "hero" of a trumped-up charge. I can only guess.

Of course, by undertaking to do a job for McGraw-Hill, an organization interested in the gathering and dissemination of economic, scientific, and technical information, I automatically made myself vulnerable.

The self-defeating workings of Soviet censorship, which usually passes stories based on current papers and magazines but kills most reports based on clippings accumulated over a period of time, compel the McGraw-Hill office in New York to work out major features of their own. These are based on whatever material its Moscow Bureau manages to send in, in addition to information gathered from other sources, and yet chiefly Soviet. The point is that, inconsistently enough, the Russians actually spend good American dollars advertising their own papers and periodicals at a time when our Moscow reports based on them are frequently killed. Therefore the stories which a man like Harry Schwartz of Syracuse University is doing for the *New York Times* constitute a valuable complement to censored daily reports from Moscow, chiefly because of the freedom Schwartz enjoys in the making of surveys from which he is able to draw conclusions. The exercise of this freedom by McGraw-Hill in New York places their correspondent in the Russian capital in an untenable position with the Soviet authorities. They at once suspect that he is violating censorship regulations and using illegitimate means of forwarding stories.

If my McGraw-Hill job exposed me to suspicion and the possibility of accusation, my temporary European assignment for N.B.C. and my request for visas may have determined the timing.

Another possible reason for choosing me was the fact that I knew many Soviet citizens, some of whom became my per-

sonal friends. Most of them were writers, artists, actors—men and women who in the eyes of the Soviet government wield the most potent of all weapons employed in a “cold war,” weapons of propaganda.

Possibly the authorities wanted to discredit me in the eyes of those people. Possibly they considered me an undermining influence and “disseminator of unobjective facts” about the U.S.A. With their many ways of finding out what people talk about, the authorities could not fail to know that I and my friends were careful to limit our conversations to general talk and the fields of art, but it so happens that the fields of art now loom larger than ever before in the eyes of the Kremlin. The authorities also knew that in my reporting to N.B.C. I was bitter about the hate-America campaign and the ruthless regimentation efforts in the field of arts, even if the censor did pull the sting out of my reports.

I was born in Russia but left at the age of fourteen, early enough to have my character and world outlook, which the Germans call *Weltanschauung*, molded by America’s great democracy in action. A desire to become more fully a part of America led me from my home in New York to Madison, Wisconsin, for my college education, and the years I spent there remain the happiest in my life. It was there that I began to think of myself as an American in the fullest sense of the word. Every year of my long stay in the Soviet Union added to my feeling of pride in being a citizen of a free country.

But when I first went to Russia, in the summer of 1935, I was starry-eyed about the land of the Soviets. Conscious of imperfections in the American way of life, hard hit by the depression, and carrying on my then young shoulders the full weight of *Weltschmerz*, I was sold on the legend of the great Soviet Utopia. But not being a Communist, I never accepted the Soviet Union with the blind fanaticism of the believers. I was particularly repelled by the workings of the Party line.

To me, the Party line's greatest crime is the wanton injury it inflicts on man's self-respect and dignity, compelling people to accept without question, out of a fear which they call discipline, a reign of terror or the betrayal of friends or a hate-America campaign.

One of Maxim Gorky's noblest contributions to world literature was his insistence on the dignity of man. "*Chelovek eto zvuchit gordo*," he said: "There is pride in being Man." Were it not for the knowledge that cynical demagoguery moves Soviet leaders and editorial writers to cite Gorky's dictum so frequently, one might attribute that frequency to a guilty conscience.



## PART THREE

### Romance in Moscow





## Chapter 8

I was a very happy young man that evening in late November of 1935, as I skated along the round Dynamo rink in the very heart of the Soviet capital. True, the American Embassy girl who had come with me lost no time in giving me up for the pleasures of some fancy figure skating in the center of the rink. But I didn't mind. Only recently returned from a trip to the unbelievably beautiful Crimean and the Caucasus, sunburned and carefree, I thought myself a pretty good figure on skates, perhaps even comparable to the haunting sight of the professor-poet William Ellery Leonard of Wisconsin University, whose white hair contrasted so irresistibly with his lean figure and breath-taking grace. Whether I actually captured some of his grace may be a matter for doubt, but the Russian girl who helped me to my feet when I suddenly tripped and fell seemed to entertain no doubt whatsoever. She definitely thought me a poor skater, and said as much, suggesting that I take lessons. Laughing mockingly, she melted into the crowd, leaving me dazzled by the music of her voice and the spark of life in her warm, green-gray eyes.

It did not take me long to spot her and fall again, this time deliberately. I fell like a well-aimed ball—right at her feet. Once more she helped me up, a process I prolonged as much as I could, until she said with resignation:

“You'd better hold onto me, so you won't fall again.”

The girl's name was Nila, and we have been holding onto each other ever since.

But it is easier said than it was done.

After several meetings I realized that she was rarely as gay as she had been that night on the ice. Something strange and alien always seemed to be on her mind, robbing me of her attention and depriving her face and voice of their normal animation.

And there were other things, more tangible and irritating. She would never invite me to her home, nor would she ever come to my room. At that time Russians mingled with foreigners more or less freely, and I could not understand her insistence that we meet only at a restaurant, a theater, or the skating rink. One day she dropped a hint but would add no more. She said:

"I do not want to harm you."

I was indignant at the very thought that she could hurt me, a free United States citizen. But all she would say was:

"You Americans are so naïve."

Months passed by. We were seeing more and more of each other, and one day I asked her to marry me; she refused without saying why.

Soon I began to fear that it was I who might do her harm, for the Great Purge had come along. I told her of my fears, and I insisted that she either marry me or I would go home to the States. It was then that she broke down and told me her story. She had been married to a Soviet writer, a young and promising author of fiction in Leningrad. Soon after the assassination of Kirov in 1934, the immediate cause of the great purge, her husband was arrested along with a number of other prominent young men of the Leningrad literary world, and died several months later in an unnamed place of banishment. She thought she loved me, but she feared that my mar-

riage to the ex-wife of an "enemy of the people," even though he was dead, might do me damage.

And there we were, two young people in love with each other, each wanting to give up the other for fear of causing harm. I felt that my professional standing and American citizenship were ample defense, but the danger to her was all too clear. I knew that ties with the citizens of foreign powers played their fatal part in the purge trials which I was covering. But I also felt that as her husband I could serve as something of a protection. And, finally, I felt that time was getting short and we must get married immediately. But she refused, saying she was not ready.

One day I learned that a quiet mopping-up operation was in process, clearing Moscow of the wives and dependents of men arrested in the purge. I immediately telephoned Nila at the place where she worked and asked to see her immediately. She, too, it transpired, had been looking for me, for she had something important to tell me. Her voice, usually rich and vibrant, sounded hollow. Facing me across the table at the Café National, she showed me a slip she had received from the militia headquarters of the Arbat area where she was registered, ordering her to report within one week.

"I have already begun to pack my one valise"—she tried to be flippant—"and I think I'll succeed in getting ready on time."

"Nothing of the sort," I said. "You are going with me to ZAGS [the Marriage and Divorce Bureau] immediately, and we shall register as husband and wife."

"But it is indecent of me to marry you under such compulsion from the outside."

"I've been wanting to marry you for nearly a year now, and you have seen in me your husband, even if you dared not admit it to yourself."

I cannot remember what else I told her, but an hour later we called at ZAGS and registered. The ceremony was as brief as it was sad. There was no music, no flowers, no white lace gown. Only a dreary old building, a dark congested office where a tired woman was registering births, marriages, divorces, and deaths.

I walked Nila back to her job and then returned to my own duties. Several months were to pass before we could lead a normal family life, for she was sharing a small room with another girl, and I had a room which had been sublet to me on the one condition that I never bring in a Soviet girl. They did not object to foreign girls because foreign girls could not claim the room. Insane and maddening as this rule was, I had to observe my promise, knowing full well that the first mention of a Russian wife would mean the loss of the room. And Nila was terrified of hotels. She still is.

When I met her for dinner on the night of our marriage her face was the color of ashes: her job was gone. She was assistant head of the art department of the now defunct French-language *Journal de Moscou*, the unofficial mouthpiece of the Foreign Office, where four editors in chief had been purged in rapid succession. As she later learned, the militia informed the current editor that staff member Nila Ivanovna Shevko (her full maiden name) had been ordered to report to local headquarters within a week, and he fired her despite very explicit trade-union regulations protecting a job holder in the Soviet Union. But it was useless to apply to the trade union, which blissfully ignored the tens of thousands of such cases. In her "labor book"—all gainfully employed Soviet citizens have such books—a notice appeared saying that she left her job "of her own free will," a display of generosity on the part of the local trade-union secretary which fooled no one. As it happened, most of the people against whom there were no direct charges, but who were deprived of their jobs at that time, left

"of their own free will." From that day on the only kind of job she could get would be manual labor.

The first week of our marriage was a living hell. Nila dreaded the very word "embassy" and strictly forbade me to go for help to Joseph E. Davies, who was then United States ambassador. She pleaded with me not to register our marriage at the embassy until long after the whole thing blew over. Months later she realized how inconsistent and unreasonable were her demands for secrecy, but at the time she was so terrified of the idea of "getting involved" with an embassy that I had to humor her.

The days were long and the nights were dark. We kept wandering along the streets of Moscow, oblivious to rain and sunshine and the lingering glances of people.

When the day came to report to the militia headquarters, I walked with her to the entrance of a small building on one of the quietest and pleasantest streets in the central part of the Soviet capital, now named after the great Russian producer, Stanislavsky. I tried to stand on my rights as a husband and go in with her, but she said it might do her more harm than good. Even though I could not follow her reasoning, I had to let her do it her way. I watched her disappear behind the door, and then crossed the street to wait, far enough away to escape the attention of the militiamen and civilians who kept coming in and out of the building.

Nila was gone for something under twenty minutes, but after the first ten I was beginning to give her up and was making plans to run to the embassy for help. Several times in the course of the last ten minutes I started to cross the street and then forced myself to go back to my waiting place.

In the meantime Nila was ushered in to see the *nachalnik* after a short wait. Without a word he gave her a form to fill out, the same form that thousands of other innocent women were filling out before being told the exact place to which

they were to be banished. The form was simple enough: date of birth, birthplace, full name, maiden name, address, etc. The *nachalnik's* eyes nearly popped out.

"What name is that you just put in?"

"This is the name of my husband."

"And what does he do?"

"He is a foreign correspondent."

"Wait a minute."

And he hurriedly left the room, apparently to make a telephone call. His secretary lifted her eyes for the first time since Nila had come in, and stared at her with undisguised curiosity. Nila thought the girl was about to ask some question, when the chief returned and said:

"Come back in a week, but you will have to sign a paper that you will not leave Moscow until after our second interview."

The second week was even more unendurable than the first, although now there seemed to be a ray of hope. Again, upon Nila's insistence, I did nothing to help her. When she called at headquarters seven days later she was received by the *nachalnik* almost immediately, and told:

"It was all a mistake. I am sorry you had to come here twice. Here is the slip you signed undertaking not to leave Moscow. You are free to travel wherever you want to—inside the Soviet Union, of course."

And he laughed as if what he had just said was a great joke. Nila did not think so, but her face was all smiles when she came out. That night Nila broke down. After three weeks of trying, I finally bought for her a *putevka*, a ticket which entitled her to two months at a sanatorium in the Caucasus on the shore of the Black Sea. She was to return to Moscow immediately after the November 7 celebrations, and would move into a hotel with me, if I could find nothing in the way of a room or apartment by that time.

At last fate began to smile on us. True, it took more than a year before the Burobin promises of an apartment were fulfilled, but something almost as good came along. It happened while I was watching the Red Army's military parade.

An American colleague of mine, Gordon Kashin, then correspondent for McGraw-Hill's *Business Week* and the London *Exchange Telegraph* news agency, hailed me and invited me to drop in at his place for a drink after the demonstration. He thought he had something for me in the way of living quarters. Like my other colleagues, he knew I was looking for an apartment. Not one of them knew that I was married.

Gordon shared a three-room apartment with Samuel Rodman, Moscow correspondent for the London *News Chronicle*. Rodman was returning to the States in a day or two, leaving his job and the apartment to Gordon. He invited me to move in with him.

The apartment was in the same building on Dogs' Lane in which Louis Fischer lived. It was his place Nila and I inherited in January 1939.

Nila was to return from the Caucasus two days after my conversation with Gordon, and I felt I had better tell him about her. But I held my tongue. I feared that mention of a wife might ruin it all.

In the course of our first dinner Gordon asked me whether I had a girl friend. Yes, I said as calmly as I could, and she was coming from the Caucasus the next night.

"Why don't you bring her for dinner?" said Gordon. "I'd like to meet her and practice up on my Russian."

"You shall," I assured him, feeling ashamed that I did not dare to shout at him: "You shall, you charming, friendly fool! You shall meet her, and she is my wife, and I love her! You hear, I love her, damn you, and the Russians, and the N.K.V.D. and the purges, and everybody!"

Gordon must have caught something in my eyes, for he said:

"Don't worry, I won't try to take her away from you."

Nila's face and bare arms when she had dinner with us the day after her arrival from the Caucasus were the color of brown sunshine, and her eyes were as green as the sea. She smelled of the sea and of mountain air.

Gordon and I walked Nila home, and on the way back he said to me:

"You are a damn fool."

"How come?"

"Why don't you marry that girl? Someone will take her away from you in no time, if you don't."

"Suppose I am married to her?"

"Then why live separately?"

"We have no place of our own."

"What's wrong with our place?"

Three days later Nila moved in.

Gordon's apartment was a three-room affair on the sixth floor of Number 15 Sivtsev Vrazhek, a huge gray-black example of the "childhood disease" of Soviet architecture, Constructivism. One room, the smallest, was ours. One was Gordon's office, where he and his secretary worked through the major part of the day. The third was the living room, dining room, library, and Gordon's bedroom. The maid slept in the kitchen.

To Nila, who had grown up after the war and the Revolution, the crowded, busy place seemed like a palace. She explored with enchantment the refrigerator, the elaborate radio, the electric iron, the complete and uniform *set* of dishes.

At first our dinners, the only meals the three of us always had together, were an ordeal for her. The maid, trained by her previous American employer, served everything in the generally accepted American style, with forks, knives, and spoons placed in their respective positions on the table, and with



everybody helping himself out of the big dish she held in front of us. And there was always a clean fresh napkin. It was a napkin that nearly spoiled Nila's first dinner with us on the memorable night when Gordon suggested she move in with us. Like most Russians, who to the present day respectfully put the napkin aside in order not to soil its starchy innocence, she daintily moved hers to the corner of the table, and looked at me approvingly when I, so as not to embarrass her, did the same. But Gordon, oblivious of the scene, manhandled his napkin.

"Did you notice how Gordon soiled his napkin last night?" Nila inquired of me the day after.

"That is what napkins are made for," I offered brilliantly. "I've been meaning to tell you about it for some time, and you had better get used to it. Sooner or later you'll be dining with other foreigners, including women who never fail to notice such things and exchange notes."

Nila caught on quickly. Her mind free of worries, her soul thawed by the warmth of love, she applied herself diligently to the study of the life and ways in her new world.

Endowed with an infinite capacity for squeezing joy out of the slightest thing, she took infinite pleasure in the little trifles that make up our civilized life. Later she shared her knowledge with her friends, who, like most Russians, were then, as they are now, shyly feeling their way toward a more gracious life.

Fascinated by clothes since childhood, Nila could perform miracles with the most unpromising material, and she still makes most of her clothes herself. But at the time I met her, like the overwhelming majority of Russian girls, she had nothing to work with, and she would not accept any gifts from me until the day we got married. Months later, when she began to understand and adopt our attitude toward things, she told me of something that had plagued her for a long time. Un-

believable as it may be to an average American, I shall describe the incident as an illustration of the Russian standard of living.

As I walked home with Nila one night a speck got into her eye, which began to water. I fetched a handkerchief out of my pocket and offered it to her, since she obviously did not have one with her. When I said good night to her I suggested that she take it along. She had several flights of stairs to climb and I thought she might need it.

"Thank you," she said. "I'll wash it and return it to you when I see you next time."

"Tomorrow."

"Let it be tomorrow. Good night."

But next day she telephoned to say she could not see me for a day or two; she would telephone again. And she hung up in a hurry, as if afraid I might say something.

She kept postponing the meeting day after day, hanging up each time in a great hurry and leaving me to the mercy of doubt and jealousy.

What actually happened was that she washed the handkerchief soon after she got to her room that night, and hung it out to dry near the open window. Somehow the handkerchief was blown out the window and disappeared. Now that was a *zaganichny* handkerchief, made abroad, snow-white with embroidered edges. It was only a forty-nine-cent buy at any department store, but how could she replace it in Moscow? She roamed the commission shops, she inquired among friends who boasted possession of *zaganichny* things, but could find nothing that looked remotely like my handkerchief. And I kept pressing to see her. How could she face me?

The handkerchief problem, as well as many similar ones, resolved itself happily. Like all correspondents, I had the right to import at a nominal duty a generous amount of food and clothes, and soon after we moved into Gordon's a package

arrived for her from Stockman's, Helsinki's great department store. Nila was so excited, she left me with Gordon and ran to our bedroom to try on the things. We waited for a few minutes, but after the first rush of noises from the room we could hear nothing. I finally knocked on the door but heard no welcoming sound. I slowly opened the door and went in. Nila was sitting on the bed with big tears rolling down her cheeks. Only one dress fitted her. The second dress, the rich brown suit, the two pairs of shoes were all a size too small.

Gradually she built up her wardrobe, and just as slowly she began to make friends among the members of the diplomatic corps and among my colleagues. She took particularly to Betty and Joseph Barnes, both keen students of the Soviet scene, and both possessing a knowledge of Russian. She also took to Anna-Lise Urbie, the daughter of the Norwegian ambassador, who discussed with Nila the history of Soviet Russia and problems of etiquette with equal zest.

One day an invitation came, requesting the company of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Magidoff at a farewell party Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov was giving in honor of the departing American ambassador, Joseph E. Davies.

That was the first diplomatic function Nila attended, and there were no end of problems. She had no evening dress, no gold slippers (she could not conceive of such a party without gold slippers), and no silk stockings good enough for gold slippers. Nila would not ask for anything from our foreign-colony friends. She was ashamed. True, when Betty Barnes learned that Nila was going to the party she thoughtfully sent her a pair of stockings of such lacy magnificence that Nila cherishes the memory of them to the present day. For her dress, Nila decided to go to our friend Anna, the wife of a Soviet film producer.

Anna was both shorter and stouter than Nila, and she had only one evening gown. The dress was black, ugly, wide, and

short. To make it fit, Nila cut the shoulder straps and sewed on a couple of inches of black material. The dress was now the necessary length but had lost the last vestiges of its non-existent lines. To cover up the patches on the shoulder straps, Nila wore a red jacket she got from the same well-meaning Anna, who also supplied gold slippers. And they were tight. Nila was a sorry sight even in my eyes. But she thought herself dressed like a queen, and the only thing that worried her was the strange idea that she might get dizzy, fall, and then the doctor would see those patches on her shoulder straps.

Nila had her first dance with me, after which I retired from the floor, since I am not a good dancer. I turned Nila over to Gordon, a much worthier partner, but in the middle of the dance he remarked that the floor was sticky.

"But it's just been polished, and it is magnificent," cried Nila. They looked down, and burst into loud laughter. Absent-minded Gordon had forgotten to take off his rubbers. He hurriedly brought her over to me and rushed out of the room to take off the rubbers. I was then talking to the Russian wife of another correspondent. Suddenly the military attaché of a small country, resplendent in a bright uniform, bowed to Nila, inviting her to dance with him. She was slow in accepting, and the other girl slapped her on the back and said:

"Go ahead, Nila, don't be bashful!"

While the several hundred guests were partaking of the forty-course dinner, the same girl suddenly shouted to a waiter who was passing by:

"Hello, Ivan Vasilyevich! Glad to see you here!"

And she rose to greet the man, who was embarrassed to the point of dropping his trayful of fried partridges. He happened to be her next-door neighbor.

"Now," she announced to the other guests seated at her table, "now we have pull and shall get double portions of anything we may want."

The silk-gowned, starch-shirted guests were choking with suppressed laughter as they looked at the tables groaning under the weight of food and wine bottles.

Those lavish caviar, vodka, and champagne Litvinov dinners with their forty courses are a thing of the past now. When Molotov assumed the duties of Commissar of Foreign Affairs in 1939 he refused to don tails, compelling all his guests to wear business suits. Since the introduction of uniforms at his ministry he now attends such functions in a resplendent gold-embroidered black uniform. Thus full dress has been reinstated but the fabulous sit-down dinners have been succeeded by comparatively prosaic buffet suppers. This enables the host to invite more guests, usually Russians representing the military, science, and the arts, all carefully screened.

With her tact and powers of observation, Nila escaped the more ridiculous and obvious mistakes in etiquette, but she continues to delight her American friends with errors in English. She no longer calls my male friends "boy friends-in-law," eats "smashed potatoes," nor does she dance the "ginger bug" or ask the grocer for a jar of "honeymoon." Nor does she apologize to a hostess for refusing more food by saying that her stomach is overcrowded; or to her English teacher, for failing to hear his question, by saying "My attention is not well today." But only last summer in New Hampshire, as we were taking a walk along Camp Rockywold's rustic trails, she exclaimed at the sight of a chipmunk: "Monkey chips!" And she asked the bewildered candy-store owner in Ashland, New Hampshire, to sell her a package of "Save the Life." Finally, she is determined never to unlearn the phrase which unfailingly yields results: "Stop biting your fingertails!"

## Chapter 9

Nila's greatest difficulties in making adjustments to her new life stemmed from inexperience in handling Russian help.

The Kremlin's insistence on building up the country's heavy industry and transport breeds shortages, and these shortages, reinforced by the abundance of jobs and lack of tradition, result in poor service. Because of this it is absolutely impossible for a foreigner living in an apartment to do without a maid, and it is next to impossible for a working correspondent to get along without a chauffeur.

My garage, for instance, was about two miles from my apartment and over a mile from my office. You could not leave a car in front of your own house without keeping an eye on it. Once I carelessly left my brand-new Studebaker in front of a colleague's house for an hour or two, and when I came out I found a hub cap and the windshield wipers missing.

There used to be two gasoline stations where foreigners could get gas. Now there is only one, a couple of miles from the center of town, and there is usually a line of cars waiting. The thirty minutes or so it takes to fill one's gasoline tank are not excessive compared to the rest of the business connected with purchasing one's gasoline ration.

First you send a letter to Burobin asking for the ration. Then your chauffeur calls again, pays for the gas, and receives a slip of paper. With that slip he goes to another part of town,

where he exchanges it for gas tickets. Then he drives out to the gasoline station and gets in line.

When a part breaks or wears out you are completely at the mercy of your chauffeur. To begin with, he spends several days looking for it. I once had a man who was extremely clever at finding parts quickly and at a rather reasonable rate. But, without telling me that he had purchased the part, he would disappear for a couple of days on a fishing trip and would come back rested and sunburned with a long and fascinating yarn of how he had chased after a guy who had the part but absent-mindedly put it in his pocket just as he was leaving for his village, and then left for the woods to hunt, or for the creek to fish, and how he, my poor Yevgeni, had to look for him, wearing out his shoes and clothes.

But the real fun begins after a part is found and negotiations start. In the first place it costs about three times the price you would pay in the States. But in addition to the rubles, the fellow wants a sweater, something like that sleeveless one, the one your mother knitted for you. Or maybe a pair of silk stockings and a lipstick, and it must be a real bright red, the red which the Russians say "tears your eyes out."

Finally, with gnashing teeth, you pay for the blasted part, which you know perfectly well was stolen from some embassy car or from some sucker like yourself. You were born under a lucky star if the part is easy to replace and the process of replacing it requires no additional help.

I was fortunate in having a good man during the last few years of my stay in Russia. Pavel Ivanovich Dyakov was probably the proudest and most conceited chauffeur in all Moscow. Not only was he dark and handsome, handy with tools and a fine driver, but he had the rare distinction of driving the two most glamorous cars seen in the Soviet capital since the United States recognized the U.S.S.R. in 1933. He was hired first as Ambassador Bullitt's private chauffeur and butler. The am-

bassador had a roadster of such striking appearance that legends about it still circulate among foreign-colony chauffeurs. And late in 1946 I imported from the States an Ozark-blue 1947 Studebaker, the very sight of which made Pavel exclaim: "This is my dream!" He had caressing names for it, such as "Studik" or "Bluebird." The moment Nila announced that she would not drive the car for fear of damaging it he accomplished with lightning speed the several jobs around the house she had been asking him to do for weeks. And whenever I expressed a desire to take the wheel he would unsell me on the idea with all the subtlety of a career diplomat.

The "Studik" healed an old wound of Pavel's. Disdainfully considering that correspondents were bastard members of the foreign colony, but somehow doomed by fate to work for them after his dazzling time with the American Embassy, he recaptured his peace of mind in flying his bluebird. Two other such cars appeared in Moscow within a year or so, but by this time he was involved with a problem of such gravity that he simply ignored their appearance. He brushed off all taunts about the two brand-new cars with: "It does not matter. I was the first."

The story of his problem goes back to the fateful night of November 23, 1946, when I slipped on the early snow and broke my leg as I was walking up to my car after a full-dress reception at the Swedish Embassy. With the help of the other waiting chauffeurs, Pavel carried me into the car and took me to the emergency hospital, where the personnel were so dazzled by the clothes Nila and I wore that I had to remind them that I was a patient waiting for help, and not a museum piece to be stared at.

Throughout the time I was laid up in the hospital, Nila would come in the morning with the mail and papers, serve breakfast, and go home, returning after her lunch. The fare at the hospital was very poor, and she was given permission to



bring food from the house. This made it possible for me to give the food I was entitled to at the hospital to the overworked and underfed attendants. Had I been registered at the hospital through Burobin, which never passed up the chance to charge us at highway-robbery rates, I would have been a ruined man. But since I had been brought in as an emergency case to a hospital that rarely serves foreigners, I was treated like any Russian, and discovered the truth of the bitter dictum that every Soviet citizen can afford to be sick. I never had to pay a kopek even though I had Russia's best surgeon at my service, the English-speaking, art-loving "genius of the operating table," Sergei Yudin. His excellent assistants and kind, attentive nurses were always on call.

Pavel would call for Nila about six, after she had fed me supper. Frequently she would be detained either by a worsening of my condition or by some story I would dictate to her which my secretary would later send off. At first Pavel was impatient with the waiting, making Nila feel uncomfortable. Taxis had not yet made their postwar reappearance as they now have on a modest scale, and busses and trolleycars were, as always, overcrowded. On several occasions she let him go until the next morning and walked the four miles home in the evening.

One day Pavel surprised her by refusing to take the afternoon and evening off, and assured her he did not mind waiting at all. And he was no longer impatient. On the contrary, on some occasions Nila had to wait for him. He would report his arrival and then disappear, saying he'd be downstairs near the car. When she'd go down there would be no sign of Pavel. At long last he would come out of the hospital and open the door to the car with guilty haste.

The inevitable *cherchez la femme* came to our lips as we discussed the new problem. And *la femme* it was. One early evening, in a hurry to get home and change in time for

dinner with some friends, Nila began looking for Pavel in the hospital corridor, and found him busy arranging the queue of people waiting at the registrar's window. The registrar, it transpired, was an attractive girl with a slightly Mongolian slant to her huge dark brown eyes. Her name was Nina and she was twenty-two.

Pavel was twenty years her senior, married to a blonde, doll-like beauty named Laura. She was his second wife. His divorced first wife and their fifteen-year-old daughter had moved to Kuibyshev.

At first we thought that Nina was merely a passing fancy of the notoriously flirtatious Pavel, but she was not. As he himself said when he told me of his affection for Nina: "I do not respect women but I respect her." He also loved her. That meant a second divorce.

In accord with the law, he filed a petition for divorce. The so-called People's District Court invited him and his wife Laura to appear. The function of the judge is to make an attempt to reconcile the two. Laura was more than willing, but Pavel was obstinate. Since love for another woman is not sufficient grounds for divorce in the eyes of the Soviet law, he said when asked the reason for his application: "She cannot bear me children." The doll-faced Laura retorted heatedly: "Your first wife had a daughter and could have had more children, but you divorced her." Pavel had to admit that he loved someone else and wanted to marry her, which confirmed Laura's worst suspicions. The judge instructed Pavel to place a notice in a paper, as legally required, announcing his intention of divorcing his wife. The judge advised him to forget the other girl meanwhile and remain with his present wife.

Now only two of Moscow's four-page papers print such notices, four to eight a day in a city of about six million. Unless one has pull, there is a wait of over a year before the notice appears. Only then can the case be tried in the City

Court, which has the power to grant or refuse a divorce. But while the divorce is pending the realities of Moscow life play tragicomic tricks on the people involved. Thus Pavel became the unwilling hero of just such a musical-comedy situation.

Nina's parents were God-fearing, old-fashioned Russians who, when they noticed the pallor, loss of appetite, and dreamy eyes of their daughter, demanded to know who the man was. Nina told them the truth, including the story of the divorce proceedings. This horrified her simple parents, who had been married for twenty-five years. But their only daughter was in tears and threatened to commit suicide if they refused to meet and accept Pavel. Invited to a Sunday dinner with them, he arrived in the dark blue suit and starched shirt I had imported for him from Stockholm, to wear when he was serving our dinner guests. Pavel's eloquence and good looks soon won the hearts of Nina's religious parents. Eager to call Nina his bride, he outlined to them a proposition that would do justice to Aubrey Piper in *The Show-Off* or the slick operator Ostap Bender, hero of the popular Soviet novel, *Little Golden Calf*.

Since Church and State are separated, Pavel argued, and since he had been married by the State only, he could now marry their daughter in a magnificent church ceremony. There would be no bigamy, and he could live with Nina with the blessings of the Church. The girl thought the idea wonderful—she would have found anything wonderful if only she could be with her Pavel—but the father felt there was something wrong and advised them to wait until the divorce came through. Still, he was touched by Pavel's eagerness to have a church wedding.

But as time went on the couple became more and more impatient, and finally induced Nina's parents to let Pavel move in and live with Nina in one of the two small rooms in the family's apartment.

The rules prevailing all over Russia forbid anyone to stay overnight anywhere without registering with the militia. In order to register you have to have the change of address duly recorded on your passport after having officially registered out of your previous abode. But Pavel did not want to register out of the one-room place he was sharing with his wife Laura. Suppose the building superintendent at Nina's place and the local militia refused to register him in? They had a right to refuse because he was not her legal husband, and they would undoubtedly have exercised that right because the building, like almost all other Moscow buildings, was overcrowded. In that case Pavel would have found himself without a roof over his head.

Also, were he to register out then and should the judge refuse to grant a divorce, he would have lost the right to claim one half of the room he was sharing with Laura. But that was not all. To retain his right to Laura's room, Pavel had to appear there at least once a week and spend the night, since there is a law depriving one of the right to living space if that space is unoccupied. To make things worse, Laura somehow discovered the address of Pavel's new home and showed up one evening when all four of them were having their supper. She began by devouring Nina with her large blue eyes, shaking her pretty head disdainfully, and saying with murderous scorn:

"So this is what you look like. Eyes and bones. I wonder what you've got that I haven't."

Ignoring the rage with which Pavel ordered her to get out, she loudly explained that whenever he came to spend the night at the old place he had to sleep with her—there was only one bed in the room and—well, even that bony chicken would understand the rest. . . . Pavel pushed Laura out of the room and told her he would kill her if she ever came back. Next day he started what turned out to be a futile three-day hunt for a bed in Moscow's commission and furniture stores. The search

ended with his "borrowing" from me the one extra bed I had in my place, and putting it up in Laura's room.

But new troubles were brewing. With the help of vodka and a couple of dinners, Pavel had succeeded in having the building superintendent and the janitor ignore for months his unregistered presence in the place, but, whether they were dissatisfied with these minor offerings, or some new strict order came along, they began to prove less and less co-operative. Until one fateful night a militiaman found Pavel sound asleep in the house where he did not belong. He was fined a hundred and fifty rubles, and Nina's father, in whose name the apartment was registered, was reprimanded and warned.

That was the last straw. Nina's father had had it in for Pavel for some time for crowding the little hallway with the collapsible rubber boat he used for fishing, and for playing recorded dance music on his portable phonograph when all self-respecting people should be asleep. And now the trouble with the militia. In short, Pavel must go!

Nina miraculously found a room which she could legally rent from a Russian woman teacher who had left for the Far East on a three-year contract. Nina was registered at the place, and moved in with her Pavel, ignoring his weekly overnight stays with Laura.

Nina did one more thing which radically changed her life. She left her hospital job and became messenger girl to a colleague of mine, an American correspondent in Moscow. But Pavel decided that a girl of her presence and "culture" was too good for work as a messenger girl, and he started to train her in the art of serving on tables.

I never was able to tell whether he was prouder of my new Studebaker or of his incomparable gifts as a waiter. He had acquired the skill during his days with Bullitt, and performed the job with the thoroughness and inspiration of a poet. Handsome in his blue suit and starched shirt, he moved around

the table as if performing a religious rite. Unheard and practically unseen, he would glide in and out of the room, replacing plates, filling glasses, and offering our cook's masterpieces with humble dignity. My degenerate capitalist upbringing made me suspect that he was insistent on knowing the names and ranks of the guests in order to have a complete report for the secret police, but it's much more likely that he sought this information so that he would never serve a person of lower rank first.

I well remember a scene which had the elements of epic tragedy. With our permission, Nina assisted Pavel, and thus learned the art of serving. The oldest and highest-ranking guest was the New Zealand minister. There was a pause in conversation at the table, and we heard Pavel excitedly whispering to Nina that the minister must be served first. Of course he meant that she should serve the minister *after* the ladies had been taken care of. But when she stepped into the room she forgot all instructions, looked everyone over with frightened eyes, and confidently walked up to the minister. Then she served the ladies. In reply to Pavel's angry questioning, Nina stubbornly insisted that she had to serve the minister first. "He looked so kind and old that I wanted to do something for him."

## Chapter 10

Nila did not have that lack of consideration for domestic servants characteristic of so many Russian housewives. I cannot blame this lack of consideration on the Soviet system, since it is a vestige of the days of serfdom, but I do blame the Soviet system for not fighting that evil energetically and effectively. Across the hall from me, for instance, lived a vice-minister of one of the lesser ministries. Though we never had any contact with him, we could not help seeing his maid frequently in tears.

This sort of treatment extends beyond the realm of domestic servants.

Once a girl from the gas company came in to check the gas meter. Having finished with us, she went across the hall to the vice-minister. About ten minutes later, apparently not knowing that we were foreigners, she knocked at our door rather excitedly and, choking with tears, asked us for permission to use the phone. From the conversation that ensued with her superior, we gathered that she had just requested that the vice-minister pay his bill for the previous month. When he told her it wasn't any of her business she threatened to cut off the gas. Whereupon he grabbed her by the collar and threw her out of his apartment. What was she to do? She was ordered to write a report.

For a while I toyed with the idea of writing a report of my

own, in the form of a cable to N.B.C., which, I knew, had no chance of being passed by the censor, but might attract the attention of people in a position to curb that Soviet bureaucrat. But I quickly abandoned the idea, realizing that the first person to be punished would be the girl for going to foreigners for aid.

Our democratic treatment of our maids invariably gave rise to suspicion. What were the *barin* (master of the house) and *barinya* up to? Suspicion would soon give way to scorn. When one maid, Olga Fyodorovna, who had many years' experience in Soviet houses, found that Nila preferred to wash and iron all her silk things rather than let them be ruined by the energetic treatment of a maid, she told her point-blank: "Forgive me, but you are no *barinya*. A real *barinya* would never even wash a handkerchief for herself."

Our apartment was scantily furnished not only because of the difficulty of obtaining furniture in Moscow, and the high cost, but also because we preferred it that way. This prompted Olga to say: "This is no apartment. It is a bare barn. I used to work for Utesov, the jazz-band leader, and he had a place like a palace, chock-full of furniture. The dishes had different engravings on them, and the furniture was all different pieces."

Our apartment remained a "bare barn" to the end, but we could not retain Olga Fyodorovna, who left us in search of a real *barin* and *barinya*.

We had a hard time trying to find a new maid after Olga left us. Next to housing and food, the search for a maid is the gravest problem for a Moscow housewife. Most of the women work and simply do not have the time to stand in queues, an accursed and ever-present feature of life in the Soviet capital. The maid has to do it. She also has to worry about keeping the house clean, preparing the main meal, and doing the dishes. To make things worse for the maids, most



Moscow houses have no gas, no running hot water, and the stores do not sell most of the miraculous household appliances to be found in America's dime stores. Of course there are no washing machines or other expensive electrical gadgets.

We were already giving up in desperation when eighteen-year-old Assia entered our lives.

Gay and self-assertive, eager for an education, she was a far cry from the average run of maids. As a matter of fact she never wanted to be a maid, she wanted to go to school, but, having just come from a Byelorussian village to the capital, where she knew no one, she condescended to take the job because she had no place to live and could not have registered in any other way with the militia. Usually maids and cooks working for foreigners do not bother with a trade-union contract, because we pay them more than the contract provides for. But not Assia. She was a Soviet girl and she wanted to do everything according to the rules.

The contract provided that we feed her, pay her trade-union dues, give her a pair of shoes a year, two dresses, provide a bed with two clean sheets a month, give her one day and two evenings off a week, and two weeks' vacation after a full year's work. I duly signed on the dotted line, and Assia was ours.

The matter of registration with Burobin somehow slipped my mind, and Assia, as I discovered later, knew nothing about it, while Burobin and the powers that be were unaware for some time that one more girl had gone to work for the foreigners.

Assia blew into our house like a gust of fresh wind from the fields of Byelorussia. She never could understand why we had to use separate towels, and change them, along with our linen, so frequently. Or why we had to use separate dishes for the bread, the meat, and the salad when the bread might just as effectively lie on the tablecloth, and the soup plate

could do superlatively for the rest. Her healthy proletarian instincts and her recollections of what she had read in school-books made her suspect that this was sheer exploitation by capitalists, although I never could get her to stop calling me *Tovarisch*.

A constant source of irritation to her was my insistence that I was not to be bothered during a meal, or when I was busy writing, with any of her million questions about life, the class struggle, and even the German language, which she was studying in her night school.

The Russians are fascinated by foreign languages, and I think that nowhere are languages being studied with such avidity as in the Soviet Union. The reason for the study of languages is obviously their educational value and their usefulness in further study and in specific jobs. But there is a trait in the Russian character which drives some to study foreign languages for the most fantastic reasons. A famous Russian engineer, Georgi Marsakov, once told me: "I find joy in my knowledge of English. I turn to it when I get tired of thinking in Russian."

An even more curious reason was given me by a dishwasher in an out-of-the-way Moscow restaurant: "I come home tired, lie down, open a French book, understand very little, and regain my self-respect."

Assia had no such exotic reason. She had to take up one language course at her school, and it happened to be German. As a matter of fact, like most Russians, she would rather have studied English, which has gradually but firmly replaced both German and French in the favor of Soviet students in the last fifteen years. The authorities have not yet been able to train enough teachers of English. Assia asked me to give her English lessons, but her innumerable questions about German alone kept me quite busy, and I declined.

Assia's dream was to own a brief case. All the people of

authority she knew carried brief cases. As a child, she had heard her father speak with respect of the district Communist Party secretary who came to inspect their collective farm: "A clever man. Knows what he is talking about. He is the Soviet power—with a portfolio." Soon after that the chairman of the collective farm returned from a visit to the nearby town with a brief case of his own.

On the eve of a flying trip I was taking to Bulgaria in the fall of 1939, I asked Assia:

"Is there anything you'd like me to bring you?"

"Yes," she said eagerly, "a brief case and a pair of rubbers."

"Fine, I'll bring you the brief case, but why the rubbers? You have recently bought two pairs of brand-new rubbers."

"Suppose we, too, get involved in the war?"

Well, Assia got her third pair of rubbers, as well as the brief case. She was so proud of it that we had a hard time convincing her it was not exactly proper to serve a meal carrying the brief case in one hand while she passed the food with the other. In explanation she'd say: "The brief case makes me feel that I am not merely a domestic servant." When I resorted to the final expedient of ordering her to part with the brief case when serving meals, she submitted with a resignation that was heartbreaking to watch.

She never disguised her distaste for her job, and we knew that sooner or later she would leave us. But before that happened we went through a chain of hilarious and pathetic experiences with the girl.

One evening we left for a full-dress dinner reception. Nila was not feeling well and we returned much earlier than usual. Getting out of the car, we noticed lights in the three windows of our apartment which faced the street. Fearing a summons to a press conference, we walked up the stairs quickly and, hearing voices, went straight to the dining room. There, facing

each other across the table, were Assia and a young soldier, having tea and cake. The soldier was a clean-cut, open-faced boy with a winning smile and a dazzlingly polished pair of boots that irrevocably changed the odor in our apartment for the next few days.

Upon seeing us in our evening clothes, the soldier jumped out of his seat, clicked his heels, and remained standing breathlessly at attention. Assia also got out of her seat. She took a couple of steps in our direction and said to the soldier, all the while looking at Nila imploringly: "Senia, meet my sister and her husband, Comrade Magidoff, artists of the Moscow circus." We shook hands with Senia and retired from the room. After the soldier left, Assia came into my study where Nila and I were sitting, and said:

"That was the only way I could explain your clothes. I know you will fire me now, but I couldn't—I just could not—tell him I was a domestic servant."

And she ran out of the room weeping like a child.

We did not fire her, but she soon left us just the same. The Burobin and the secret police finally woke up and ordered her to register with them. Whether she happened to find another job with a room, or whether she refused to keep a report on our activities, I could not find out. She simply said, with lowered eyes, that she was leaving us. Years later I learned from the elevator girl who had originally recommended her to us that Assia had joined a school for streetcar motormen and is now one of the best Stakhanovites in the Moscow transport system.

Before parting with Assia, I must relate another little incident. She once came to my room as I was looking up some information on the Red Army in an outdated history book. It contained a full-page portrait of the exceedingly handsome General Tukhachevsky, who was executed during the Great Purge as a traitor to his country. Pointing to the portrait, I

said: "Handsome, isn't he?" To which Assia replied without a moment's hesitation:

"An enemy of the people cannot be handsome."

Our next maid, the redhead Lyena, was worlds apart from Assia. She had none of the younger girl's spontaneity, gaiety, and inoffensive familiarity. Nor did she have Assia's visions of a career in Soviet industry. She was a born cook. Work in the kitchen was her profession, and the only passion in her life. She had had several years' experience cooking for a secretary at the American Embassy, and knew all there is to know about the culinary art. At least that was what we and our dinner guests thought. She disagreed. She kept demanding that I get her new collections of recipes.

Lyena went about her job with the same dignity and awareness of her importance as Pavel went about his job of serving at the table. In one of her rare moments of talkativeness she said to me and Nila:

"You think you keep the house going. All you do, madame, is read books and go to receptions, and you, sir, you just keep talking on the phone and rattling on the typewriter. But I worry my head off."

And she did worry her head off because she was a perfectionist. One day she was thirty minutes late with lunch because she could not find parsley with which to decorate our meat plates. She visited two markets in addition to the one she always went to, before she found the parsley. When I told her that time was more precious to me than the color scheme on the platter, she shrugged her shoulders with devastating scorn.

A peasant in her psychology and an artist by temperament and in her trade, she was stingy and honest. She insisted on working out a monthly budget and performed miracles of economy to adhere to it. During the time that I was laid up at the hospital, doctors advised me to eat at least a pound of

apples a day, at the mad rate of four and a half American dollars per pound. Lyena refused to include the item in her budget, although Nila gave her extra money for it. "I cannot spend that much money for such silly stuff," she said, and Nila relegated that duty to Pavel.

Lyena hated it when we had Russians or correspondents in for a meal. They ate too much: the correspondents because most of them lived at the Metropole and were sick and tired of the boring hotel food, and the Russians because until recently most Russians were hungry most of the time. And besides, she felt they had no manners. Her principles on that score were ironclad. She particularly despised one man who talked to her while she served, praising her food. It is almost as if to please Lyena the Soviet authorities launched their hate-foreigners campaign which chased all the Russians out of our house.

Her sense of competition was as strong as that of American reporters. Whenever we came home after a meal at the house of some foreign diplomat she would inquire jealously about the food. Once we were careless enough to suggest that last night's dinner at the Mexican Embassy was particularly elaborate and tasty. For twenty-four hours she would not speak a word, the meals were almost as bad as Assia's, and the angry clatter of pots and pans in the kitchen was heard over the entire apartment. That evening she did a lot of telephoning. Next day she made a trip to the Mexican Embassy and interviewed the cook. Then she began to complain that we had not received dinner guests for a long time—by which she meant diplomats. When we finally gave a dinner the menu proved a complete replica of the Mexican dinner, only it was better.

Lyena was ignorant and superstitious. When I let her go with the outbreak of hostilities in Russia, I promised that I would take her back as soon as the war was over. She dropped

in at the Metropole Hotel in September 1944, inquiring whether I was ready to rehire her.

"But the war is not over yet, is it?"

"It is not, but there are signs that it will be over soon."

"What signs, Lyena?" I asked gently.

"Well, there are no mushrooms this year. And almost all the newborn babies are girls."

Almost completely illiterate and devoid of any interest in the theater, cinema, or politics, Lyena considered herself a woman of culture. Her clothes were as immaculate as her cooking, and working for foreigners gave her the opportunity to exercise her good taste. Still, she had her troubles with men. Or rather, an absence of troubles with men. They were simply not interested in her. Some were scared off by her belligerently red hair; others by her short, stout figure. But the real root of her trouble lay deeper than that.

She once made the acquaintance of a bookkeeper and saw a great deal of him, especially evenings when she would go to his house to prepare supper for him. But that did not last long. In tears, she confided to Nila: "I am through with him. I am through with all men. All they are interested in is the stomach. There is no romance in this world."

But she was not through with men. Not just then. She made another try.

A friend of hers, knowing of her yearning for marriage and a normal home life, arranged for her to meet an eligible bachelor. Lyena borrowed from Nila a pair of white gloves and her pearls. Excited over the event, and secretly hoping the man would not snatch Lyena away from us, Nila presented her with two combs adorned with blue flowers, and dabbed a few drops of precious Chanel No. 5 on the prospective bride.

Lyena had not returned when we went to sleep that night. But at breakfast the next morning I took one sip of coffee and said: "The marriage is off." After I left for the office she

told my wife why. The man was a truck driver and could talk about nothing but his sturdy Lend-Lease Studebaker truck and his skirmishes with Moscow militia on account of traffic violations. He did not appreciate the finesse of the meal she had cooked for the occasion at her friend's home. He leaned more heavily on the black bread than on the exquisite rolls she baked out of our Grade A American flour. And he used his fingers to pick up a piece of herring from the plate. In short, "I think he would have taken me, but I cannot share my life with a man with such poor manners."

Lyena remained with us until our last morning in Russia. That same day my colleague, Walter Cronkite of the U.P., one of the few correspondents who enjoyed the luxury of an apartment in Moscow, hired her.



## PART FOUR

# Emily Post Invades Russia



## Chapter 11

A unique, fascinating process is quietly, almost imperceptibly, taking shape in the Soviet Union amid the uncertainties of atomic peace. Hard-driven by Stalin's postwar Five-Year Plan, and uneasy about the boldly expansionist Soviet foreign policy, in the making of which they have no say, the Russian people are timidly groping for a new style of living.

Like everything else about Russia, this groping is tortuous and heavy with complications and contradictions. With Western models officially *verboten* nowadays, the Soviets are in the embarrassing position of deprecating every major achievement of Anglo-Saxon culture on the one hand, and of bringing out a limited edition of the works of Emily Post on the other. This erstwhile Bible of the American twenties and thirties is used in the school for future diplomats run by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in Red Army academies, particularly schools for military attachés, where special attention is paid to etiquette. Emily Post's book, however, is not for sale to the general public.

It can always be argued, of course, that Moscow is instructing its official representatives abroad in the social graces of the "degenerate" Western democracies on the time-honored theory that it takes a fool to catch a fool, but this does not explain the preoccupation of millions of Russians, particularly the girls, with modes and manners, nor does it explain

the widespread influence of Western, and especially American, standards.

The word *inostranets*, meaning foreigner, is still synonymous in Russia with the well-groomed, the chic, the well-mannered. And the word *zagranichny*, meaning made abroad, is synonymous with quality and smartness. Many beauty shops and tailoring establishments are called *Amerikanka* in various Soviet cities.

Russian ways are simple, but once having become conscious of etiquette, they are among the most protocol-minded people in the world. They frequently mistake failure by foreigners to observe protocol as a deliberate insult to their national dignity.

During the war I met a Soviet engineer who had just returned to Moscow from a trip to the United States as a member of a purchasing commission. When I asked him about his impressions of the U.S.A., he told me the following story:

"One day I came in to see a big American industrialist. I came on time and was dressed very properly for the occasion, but the American was in his shirt sleeves, chewed gum, and after the first greeting, sat down in a swivel chair and put his feet on the desk as he discussed business with me.

"I saw in it an obvious and calculated insult to a representative of the Soviet Union, but went on talking to him because we needed his product. After a while I paid a call on another big executive and the same thing happened—gum chewing and feet on the desk. I got so angry I, too, sat down and defiantly put my feet on the desk, but he paid no attention to it and went on in his usual friendly and businesslike way. At that moment I understood something about America I had never understood before."

On the other hand an immaculately gowned and madly hatted woman who obviously lives by the rules recently cornered me at a tea in Bronxville, asking anxiously:

"What am I to expect? My son who spent some time in Mos-

cow—he was with the American Embassy, you know—is bringing his Russian wife over here soon. In the meantime, they have had two years somewhere in Iran, which could hardly have improved matters. Will she have *any* manners?”

The woman had evidently been anticipating with dread her role as a lady Pygmalion to an awkward gamine. I could imagine that dozens of questions, which she was too well mannered to ask, were running through her mind.

“Will the girl insist on having her maid sit at the table with her? Will she go around clapping people on the back and calling them ‘comrade’? Can she dance anything but those awful things which make people squat down and shoot out their legs? Does she know that her bag must match her shoes and gloves? Do they use such simple things as napkins in Russia, and will she toss her chicken bones over her shoulder like Henry VIII, and wipe her hands on her skirts?”

The lady obviously wasn’t aware of the fact that the questions plaguing her are today on the minds of millions of Russians. Problems of good taste in both manners and clothes are now rising with an urgency never before experienced. They are complicated by the stresses and strains of the Communist Party campaign which brands conformance to Western standards as “fawning before things foreign,” as well as by different and frequently conflicting standards and traditions.

Many Russians still do not consider belching after a meal as bad manners, since this is taken as an indication of a good meal well appreciated.

When visiting, you are supposed to refuse the food as it is offered the first time. The host then offers the food once more—this is the time to accept.

If one is in bed, indisposed, it is bad manners to eat much. If you eat a lot you cannot be ill. My mother-in-law was ill one day, and I happened to come into her room as she was served a meal. When Nila reproached her for not finishing the soup,

she said: "It was not polite to eat it all when one is sick. Especially since Robert was in the room." And she added longingly: "The soup was excellent, too."

At a Molotov reception I once saw a Red Army general, a giant of a man, solemnly cutting up an olive with a knife. There, too, I watched, spellbound, a Soviet diplomat's wife trying—and finally succeeding—in piercing a piece of chocolate with a fork, and then gently bringing the tortured sweet to her mouth. She, incidentally, was wearing a black dress, beige shoes, and a brown bag.

But it is the story of Yekaterina Baryshnikova that goes to the core of the problem. Until comparatively recently an obscure worker in the Moscow Ball Bearing Works, Baryshnikova became a celebrity when she received the coveted Stalin Prize for introducing a method which drastically stepped up production at her plant. She became the foreman in her section, and at a workers' meeting, the Trade Union Council nominated her for membership in an important committee, roughly equivalent to being nominated to a national committee of women's clubs in the United States, with the added distinction that her job was semiofficial.

But her triumph was short-lived. One of her fellow workers, an elderly woman, took the floor and said: "Katya is a good worker, there is no denying that, but she sets a poor example for the other young people here, especially the girls. She is a show-off, talks like a truck driver, rolls her own cigarettes in public, and in general has bad manners."

The trade-union leaders who nominated Katya put up a defense for her, praising her production record, and even reminding the meeting of her respectable, hard-working, proletarian parents—in a word, of her gentle birth. But the big-mouthed, cigarette-rolling Katya was voted down, and even a large section of the younger set turned against her.

This, by the way, is a typical example of the much-publi-

cized Soviet principle of "self-criticism" at work, permitting the people to raise their voices against anybody or anything in the U.S.S.R.—that is, with the exception of the leaders and the Party line. Anyone daring to criticize the line or someone in the Politburo, or even in the Communist Central Committee, is immediately branded a "Trotskyite" or "a slave to Western imperialist ideology."

Another aspect of the same problem that bothered Katya's critics was highlighted by an article in the Communist youth paper, the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, on cave-man tactics on the part of some Russian swains.

Recounting in painful detail the story of a "romantically inclined girl" and her boorish wooer, the writer reached heights of tragedy when he described the young man's invitation to a dance. "He dragged her by the hand toward the orchestra the way an unskilled militiaman would drag a rioter or a criminal to a police station. The girl was very fond of dancing, but on this occasion she refused the invitation. They never met again, and the love in her heart flickered out forever."

The writer suggested issuing books on good manners for the country's youth, one of which he tentatively called *The Art of Not Treading on the Toes of Persons of the Female Sex*. The best cure, in his opinion, was to make everybody realize that "true culture demands that men and boys demonstrate their respect for women in daily life."

"True culture"! No other word, except possibly "atom," is now more pregnant with meaning in Russia than the word "culture" or *kulturny*, its adjective. Not to offer your seat to an aged person in the subway or streetcar is being *niekulturny*, or uncultured. To remain seated when a woman addresses you, to spit in a public place, to smack your lips loudly during a meal—all these and a hundred similar little things are branded as *niekulturny*.

It was not always thus in the Soviet Republic. Simplification and sometimes downright destruction of all rules of etiquette and good manners was the unwritten law of the Soviets as they emerged victorious out of the struggle with the old world of the "haves." A long period of what might be called inverted snobbery followed the Revolution of 1917. And no one was more eager to shed every vestige of refined behavior than the intellectuals and members of the hitherto privileged classes.

In the streets of Moscow and Leningrad men with the unmistakable gait of tsarist officers stalked along in peasant garb. Girls with delicate features and hands were to be seen inadequately camouflaged in oversized sheepskins and country shawls. Ladies who had graced the drawing rooms of St. Petersburg spent days and weeks striving to acquire rough manners, smoked, drank, copied masculine gestures, developed husky voices, and even enriched their vocabularies with Russia's Protean, persuasive, and hair-raising curses. That was their pathetic way of keeping in step with the times. That was also a way of enhancing a wistful sense of security in a changing world, although, more often than not, those poor souls succeeded in deceiving only themselves.

With the consolidation of the Soviet state, which began in the early thirties and was given tremendous impetus during the war, a revaluation of many things began to take place in Russia, and one of them was the concept of manners. But progress has been slow. A dictatorship can change a political climate overnight, can make generals, colonels, and lieutenants out of "Comrade Commanders" by the stroke of a pen, can without warning declare a man of the stature of "beloved Marshal Tito" a traitor to the "cause," but it cannot change the behavior and tastes of two hundred million people with equal dispatch. Who was it that said: "Good manners require time and space"?



When I first went to Moscow in 1935 the legend was still fresh of how Lazar Kaganovich, Stalin's chief industrial trouble shooter and then Russia's railway tsar, reprimanded a high railway official from the Urals whom he had summoned to see him. The man was taken to task for not having shaved and changed his shirt before rushing straight from the station to his chief's office. Having given the official a good dressing down, Kaganovich sent him away and received him only after the man had applied soap to his body, a brush to his hair, and a razor to his face.

Thus, faintly but irrevocably, the fear of five o'clock shadow made its appearance in the brave new world of the Soviets.

Dancing schools were opened everywhere in the middle thirties. Encouraged by the leaders, practically every large office and factory in the cities, and every self-respecting collective farm clubhouse, ran "dancing circles" for people of all ages who came after supper to dance clumsily under the energetic if not always expert direction of a dashinglly dressed man and his partner. The larger clubs and concert halls vied with each other for the services of the best jazz bands in town. Moving picture theaters featured as an added attraction "modern Western dances" a half hour before the showing of the film.

"Dancing circles" flourished even in many concentration camps, run for the benefit of the personnel in charge of those camps, particularly for the bored wives of the busy officials. Instead of hiring dancing teachers, the camp officials were, and possibly still are, in the habit of securing the services of young male prisoners who were thus released from back-breaking toil.

Russia's combination of Paul Whiteman and Duke Ellington, the effervescent Leonid Utesov, became one of the most popular men of his generation in a country which was rapidly

forgetting Maxim Gorky's dictum that "jazz is vulgar music for the stout." Ivan Papanin of North Pole fame played some of Utesov's records to his three comrades on their celebrated ice floe and made the following entry in his diary: "Thanks, Utesov. Your records amused us and lent color to our grim existence." During the war Red Army men voted Leonid Utesov top performer of the nation.

Nowadays jazz, branded as an expression of "the degenerate, dying capitalist civilization," is in the doghouse and official sanction is reserved exclusively for folk music and folk dancing.

By a strange coincidence, jazz music flourished in Russia at the time Hitler panned it in Germany.

The eager acceptance of new standards in clothes, manners, and entertainment pointed to the simple fact that the Soviet people yearned for such things, that the country was starved for what the Russians call a "beautiful life." The high point in the efforts to attain it was reached in 1935 when Stalin announced: "Life has become better, life has become gayer, Comrades." That was the stamp of official approval, a matter of utmost significance in a dictatorship.

The quest for gracious living began to embrace one aspect of daily life after another. Newspapers criticized in no uncertain language the insufficient supply of forks, knives, and spoons in restaurants and factory canteens, as well as the shockingly *niekulturny* ways of both waiters and customers. The most popular Soviet humorists of their time, the late Ilf and Petrov, caused a sensation, after their return from a trip to the United States in the middle thirties, with their unqualified eulogies of American service techniques. Russia became aware of the idea that the customer may sometimes be right—so much so that an unusual brand of customer joke appeared, like the one about the salesman with the difficult client, who finally cried in desperation: "Dear lady, please

take a seat, and I shall send myself packing to the devil's mother."

The dream of the life beautiful spread, touching millions who had never had a chance to develop an awareness of it. Their taste was not always good, alas. All too many girls could be seen in prewar, wartime, and postwar Soviet cities, from Minsk to Vladivostok, with their hair dyed a brassy, shameless yellow. I have seen at least a dozen bemedaled Red Army officers getting permanents at the Hotel Metropole beauty shop.

In the still smoldering Ukrainian city of Kharkov, two days after liberation, I saw Red Army men standing in line in front of a basement at the entrance to which hung a hastily crayoned sign: "Manicure."

Countless peasant girls made a rush for silk stockings, underwear, and dresses, creating immediate shortages.

In general, this newborn desire for life's amenities caused a major bottleneck in Soviet light industry, since most of the country's resources and manpower are invariably employed in building up Russia's industrial war potential. The consumer goods produced in the Soviet Union, in addition to being of insufficient quantity, are of inferior quality. This tends to emphasize the superiority of the comparatively few things from abroad which somehow manage to reach the Soviet market.

The Hitler invasion brought an almost complete cessation of the production of consumer goods. But it did not do away with the yearning for them. Having lived in Russia throughout the war, I am in a position to testify that the people then looked better dressed than they had before. The simple reason for this surprising fact was that the majority of the population was quickly reduced to wearing its Sunday best.

The urge for fine clothes, varied and well-served food, livable apartments, good manners—all the things that go into

the making of gracious living—this urge is now stronger in Russia than ever. The inevitable reaction to the horror, suffering, and sacrifices of the war does not alone account for it. There are other factors at work which are even more vital.

For a decade before the war, and during the long years of the fighting, the Soviet people were exhorted by their leaders and the six million members of the ruling Communist Party to give their blood, sweat, and toil in the name of the beautiful life that was to come after the victorious showdown with Fascism. The Soviets themselves put this large bee in the bonnets of their countrymen, and now it is buzzing with a vengeance.

This life beautiful no longer exists merely in the Russian imagination. Millions of Soviet officers and men, and tens of thousands of girls who were drafted or hired to serve in the Soviet armed forces, have returned from the lands west of the U.S.S.R., full of strange tales and loaded with looted objects. They told their friends about kitchens and bathrooms sparkling with the brightness of an angel's wings. They brought back reports of miraculous beauty aids and utensils that were a joy to behold. They passed along stories of cleanliness and politeness even amid ruins. These men and girls proved the existence of a life of comfort and urbanity which the majority of the Russians have known only from books and echoes from abroad. Some of these echoes came from the guarded lips of Soviet diplomats returning to Russia.

All too many people in the United States succumb to wishful thinking and regard these traveled Red Army men and girls as a potential political force inimical to the Soviet regime, an opposition minority, as it were. They may be, but in the most remote and indirect way, for most of them are demobilized and scattered over the vast country, a hopeless minority in their respective factories, collective farms, and other Soviet organizations.

They are, however, important in that they strengthen the

nation's yearning for the amenities of life. Here their role is very real, for the tales they tell and the example they set, not without the help of plundered accessories, do affect life in many a nook and corner of their enormous fatherland.

The astute men in the Kremlin were quick to sense this desire for better living, and lost no time in channeling and controlling it. Bent on carrying out their reconstruction and industrialization program, they had no intention of inaugurating a Five-Year Plan for housing and light industry, the only really effective measure for creating abundance, the major prerequisite for gracious living. Instead they increased to a slight degree the trickle of consumer goods flowing to Russia's thirsty millions, and they simultaneously loosed a torrent of propaganda.

The motto of the day is to "live up in their daily life to the high level of cultural development achieved in the U.S.S.R." From time to time a full page of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* or even an entire issue of the country's only humorous magazine, the *Crocodile*, is devoted to shaming the ill-mannered and admonishing the "cave men." Discipline has been tightened in the schools, and school children are compelled to wear white collars subject to daily inspection.

Special attention is devoted to people whose positions expose them to public life and scrutiny.

Thus an intensive good-manners campaign keeps plaguing the two million or so officials and executives functioning in the Soviet Union. Obligatory lectures on behavior and apparel are given to the men and women who are invited to Kremlin parties or to receptions at which they rub shoulders with foreign diplomats. And, finally, courses on etiquette are part of the curriculum at cadet schools, military academies, and the Foreign Office Institute for Diplomats.

The course on etiquette for the young men training for diplomatic work abroad (as a rule, girls are not accepted at

that institute) includes a study of Emily Post. Characteristically, the Russians are exhorted to conform to the behavior of Miss Post's famous couple, Mr. and Mrs. Oldname of the Small House of Perfection, rather than the standards of Golden Hall or the Worldlys of Great Estate. Unostentatious but unimpeachable behavior is the goal. In a word, the ultimate in Anglo-American snobbery.

It might be added here that pre-Revolutionary Russian books on etiquette, which occasionally do find their way to secondhand bookstores, command even higher prices than translations of Hemingway, who is to the Russians the greatest living foreign author.

Magnificent if moth-eaten tsarist dowagers have been dragged out of their attics to instruct the young in the ancient formulas of correct behavior. Russia, too, once had its genteel tradition.

The result is that there are fewer occasions for suppressed smiles at the expense of Russians abroad, provoked by the mishandling of napkins or the graceful estrangement of the little finger from its brethren, a characteristic Russian misconception of *bon ton*. Also rarer are instances in which Soviet girls, traveling abroad, purchase startlingly incorrect clothes.

But it is the Red Army officers who are really getting the full treatment.

The flood of receptions precipitated by the arrival of the Allied military missions soon after the outbreak of the Russo-German war hastened the change in the training of the Soviet officer for social life. It was painful to observe the flower of the Red Army at official functions. The amused correspondents invariably referred to Soviet generals and officers as "wall-flowers." They rarely danced, were monosyllabic in conversation, and appeared to be continually looking for the nearest exit. Molotov noticed that and frowned. Stalin heard of it and he, too, frowned. His frown was communicated to the late

Marshal Shaposhnikov, an old tsarist officer, then Chief of Staff.

As a result separate Red Army clubs were organized on a "class" distinction basis: clubs for officers, and clubs for non-coms and privates. One of the important functions of the former is the fostering of the gentle arts of hand kissing, heel clicking, dancing, and the correct way to tackle a buffet supper.

At this point Lieutenant General Alexi Ignatyev came into the limelight, and he has stayed there ever since. Formerly a count and officer of the Tsarina's personal bodyguard, he also served before the Revolution as Russian military attaché in Japan, Sweden, Finland, and France. Now over seventy, he is still one of the handsomest men in Russia. He stands six feet two. He is dashing yet restrained; sparkling with wit and ready conversation. In spite of this he commands the respect of his close-mouthed colleagues. At receptions he is usually accompanied by his wife, a former ballerina and cabaret dancer who has magically retained much of her earlier charm and vivacity.

It was natural that General Ignatyev, the very embodiment of grace and good manners, should become the Emily Post of the Red Army. His amazingly well-written memoirs, *Fifty Years a Soldier*, provide a rich source of information on court life and manners of his time, and are avidly read in the Soviet Union.

Until he became *arbiter elegantiae*, the dictator of good manners in the Soviet Army, General Ignatyev supervised the study of foreign languages in the country's armed forces. It is not generally known that the acquisition of at least one foreign language is obligatory for Soviet officers. The number of languages they know partially determines their rate of pay. Thus, along with all the violence of the current anti-foreigner campaign, the Bolsheviks are admitting that even

Russian nationalism has got to stop somewhere short of suicide.

General Ignatyev lords it over the polishing of the manners of the military. His realm extends from the marshals down to the cadets of the military school named after the greatest of tsarist generals, Alexander Suvorov.

Soviet Russia's ten Suvorov schools are trying to recapture the once celebrated gallantry of tsarist officers. Gallantry on the street and in the ballroom must go along with gallantry in battle.

An incident I observed on a Moscow street bears testimony to the success of both teachers and students.

A ten- or eleven-year-old Suvorovite was walking along the street in his smart black uniform with its red shoulder straps and snow-white gloves, careful to salute every officer he passed. A street urchin who, unlike most Russian boys, was not impressed by the sight of a Suvorovite, trailed the future marshal, mocking him all the way. The young cadet did his best to ignore these taunts and finally about-faced, clicked his heels, and said: "Citizen, stop that nonsense or I'll have to call you to order." The "citizen" stuck his tongue out. The Suvorovite took off his little white gloves so as not to soil them, and knocked the boy down. Then he put on his gloves again and proceeded as if nothing had happened, careful to salute every officer he passed.

For all I know, this boy was one of the thirty-odd I once watched in a Suvorov school taking a lesson in how to kiss a lady's hand. There were tears in their eyes as they marched up for the hundredth time to a withered old lady, clicked their heels, bowed, and kissed her hand.

Most of these future officers and gentlemen are sons of Red Army men killed in the war, or boys who fought the Germans as guerrilla scouts. Table manners are the first thing they are taught at the Suvorov schools. The difference between



man and beast, they are told, is that man brings his food up to his mouth, whereas an animal brings its mouth down toward the food. The boys are shown how to handle a napkin, fork, knife, spoon, and teacup on a saucer out of which they are forbidden to drink, contrary to the time-honored Russian tradition.

Today no Soviet officer is allowed to marry unless his chosen one has a high school education. But the overwhelming majority of the officers have risen from the rank and file, and naturally those who married before the new ruling came out took girls of their own kind. More often than not that meant simple peasant or factory girls and this created a real problem, exactly as happened at the court of Napoleon I.

Some of the officers, not unlike some successful men in other countries, have solved the problem by the simple expedient of divorcing their wives and marrying actresses, ballerinas, or their educated and attractive secretaries. But the Bolshevik leaders frown on this practice, and public opinion censures it most bitterly, although it does not necessarily approve of the constantly stiffening Soviet divorce laws. These laws are hardest on officers, who are not permitted even to apply for divorce without the approval of the respective senior commander.

The problem of the discrepancy between many a Soviet husband's station in life and his wife's cultural level remains unsolved in all too many cases. This problem has even forced itself into Soviet literature, becoming the theme of a number of short stories. One of them, by the now disgraced humorist Mikhail Zoshchenko, tells of the difficulties between a high Soviet executive and his *niekulturny* wife, who he vainly hopes will learn to read and write. One day the illiterate wife finds a letter in her husband's pocket, written on an elegant blue sheet of paper in a no less elegant handwriting. With the fury of a wounded tigress, the jealous wife begins to study

the Russian alphabet and becomes literate—only to discover that the suspicious letter is merely a memo from her husband's secretary informing him that she has placed an order for the several books he wanted for his wife to read the moment she had learned how.

The popular Soviet anecdote about a general's wife and her piano bears out the same idea. Having moved to a new house, the general's wife decided to put her piano in her bedroom instead of the spacious living room. "But," objected the architect, "the bedroom has no resonance." "That's all right," said the lady calmly, "I'll write to my husband in Berlin, and he'll send it to me."

Like the *nouveaux riches* in every country, the wives of generals and scientists who have recently been elevated to unprecedented heights of social standing and material well-being are the butt of many Soviet anecdotes.

One of them concerns the passion of these wives for silver fox furs, which is not unlike the craze for mink in the United States. The story tells of a group of generals and their wives attending a performance at the Bolshoi Theater of the Opera and Ballet. Here the elite of Soviet society exhibit the latest fashions, as women in Paris wear their smartest dresses to the races in summer, the opera in winter. That night each of the generals' wives wore two or three silver foxes, on the theory of the more the better. But instead of self-satisfaction, bewilderment was plainly written on the faces of these women. Two rows in front of them sat a marshal and his wife, not wearing a shred of silver fox as far as they could tell. Had styles changed overnight? At long last the intermission came. Everyone rose and turned to the exits. And then the poor generals' wives saw hanging from the gown of Madame Marshal, on the exact spot where her husband displayed his ribbons, tails of seven silver foxes. . . .

It can easily be seen that Atelier Mod, the state-run organi-

zation which dictates styles and fashions in the Soviet Union, has a difficult clientele. It is not that the Soviet ladies are uncooperative—it is rather their overexuberance that is the problem. Under these circumstances it is probably just as well that the Kremlin frowns upon the New Look.

True, there was a brave, pathetic attempt last spring on the part of a few sophisticated Soviet young women, who somehow managed to get a peek at a copy of *Vogue* or *Harper's Bazaar*, to introduce the New Look in Moscow, but the attempt was instantly stopped. And I was told why by the head designer of the Atelier Mod. "The New Look is merely the typical expression of the degenerate capitalist world," said she and continued with the irrevocable finality of the *Literary Gazette* blasting Jean-Paul Sartre: "The New Look is to the capitalist world of fashion what existentialism is to literature, what formalism is to art and music, and what Hollywood's reactionary gangsterism is to films."

There was no decree against ankle-length skirts in Moscow, as there actually was in Berlin. All Soviet girls and women in the German capital were forbidden to indulge in the reactionary vanities of the New Look.

The only official Marxist comment on the New Look, as far as I know, appeared in *Scanteia*, the organ of the Communist Party in Rumania. An editorial carried by the paper last summer announced that the New Look was "an imperialist plot of predatory America to enslave women's minds and distract them from the fight for peace and for liberation from the yoke of capitalism." The Communist Party organ stated with satisfaction that very few Rumanian women had been trapped by the new fashion, but urged all of them "to intensify their vigilance against the perfidious infiltration of imperialist bourgeois influence."

The head designer in the Moscow Atelier Mod would no doubt have approved of that editorial in the Rumanian paper.

When I asked her how Russian designers are answering the New Look she said defiantly: "We go to the arts and crafts of the people for inspiration," and showed me some perfectly lovely dresses and blouses adorned with Russian, Ukrainian, and Uzbek national designs. She blushed with satisfaction when I complimented her on her creations, but admitted with a sigh that very few Soviet girls will wear such delightful things for some years to come, because the fatherland is still short of consumer goods.

Waste in America, as seen in the movies, is appalling to the Russians. They simply don't believe it. When Nila watched a party on the screen, and saw girls sit down on the floor while wearing what seemed to Nila magnificent dresses, she did not believe her eyes. Nor did she believe me when I said that such things frequently happen in America. It took a trip to the States to convince her.

One day in 1937 Nila attended a private Russian party in which Maxim Litvinov's British wife participated. Nila came home with the exciting story—nobody at the party, she said, could talk of anything else—of how Ivy Litvinov washed up at the toilet and discarded the towel in a wastebasket after having used it *only once*. The most widespread comment was: "Does she think she's a doctor?"

Russia is indeed short of those goods, and even of the most obvious of them all—food. This despite the fact that the general standard of living in the Soviet Union has been rising since the end of the war.

There is an American cookbook, a Russian translation of which has been causing hilarity in many a Soviet home because of a chapter entitled "Unbidden Guests."

"What to do when half a dozen totally unexpected guests drop in on you in the evening and you have *nothing* in the house?" the chapter starts off gaily. "This is always a hostess' nightmare. Well, don't let it frighten you. There is no problem

at all, really. You simply open your refrigerator and take out half a leftover chicken, sliced ham, some cold boiled potatoes, lettuce, mayonnaise, tomato, and celery, and in the twinkling of an eye you have a most delicious cold salad!"

So this is what an American housewife does when half a dozen people drop in unexpectedly and there is *nothing* in the house! The passage never fails to arouse laughter among the Russians, laughter not unmixed with tears.



## PART FIVE

### Some Russians I Knew

*Fearing that I might harm my Russian friends,  
I have not included the stories  
of many people whom I knew intimately.*



## Chapter 12

Like other foreigners in the Soviet Union, the Russians I had most contact with were the so-called "Russkis." The word "Russki" means "Russian," or "a Russian," but in the lingo of the English-speaking foreign colony in Moscow it has come to represent Russians who work for foreigners.

The Russkis live in a world all their own, with its temptations, rewards, and dangers. Russki men and women live lavishly in comparison with the average Soviet citizens. It is an uprooted and artificial world, a crooked mirror reflecting the life of the foreign colony.

The Russkis get higher wages than the other Russians. A Soviet chauffeur, for instance, is paid seven to eight hundred rubles a month. I had to pay my chauffeur over sixteen hundred rubles a month in addition to other considerations.

Some embassies pay their Soviet employees half in cash, half in imported food or, preferably, clothes. These are sold, subjecting the seller to the very real danger of being picked up and arrested on charges of speculation, with the resultant confiscation of property.

By writing letters on our stationery, with or without permission, the Russkis buy tickets to theaters and movies without having to stand in line. They can get their medical prescriptions filled in a similar fashion. By using our cars, again with or without permission, they can take their friends out for rides or go on picnics.

One day, returning home from a picnic in the outskirts of Moscow, I met a colleague of mine at the Metropole and expressed surprise at seeing him because I had noticed his car parked not far from mine. I had assumed he was there with a girl of whom I had caught a glimpse. My colleague was furious. His chauffeur had asked for the afternoon off because, he said, he had to make a long report on him to the secret police. Instead, or possibly after making the report, he had ridden off with a girl. My colleague fired the man, who promptly found himself another job, this time with an embassy.

All Russkis have to report on the people for whom they work. Thus there is a divided loyalty—to the unbending state and to the hand that feeds you, inducing you to play a double game.

Many of the Soviet employees succumb to the temptation of cheating foreigners, the majority of whom do not speak Russian. I once bought an almost brand-new Vauxhall from an Englishman who was suddenly recalled to London. The car was in perfect shape, except for the speedometer, which had been wrecked by the chauffeur. The Britisher had insisted on making a memo of mileage each time the chauffeur took the car to the garage and each time it was brought back in the morning. He had discovered that the two-mile distance between his home and the garage frequently extended to ten, fifteen, and sometimes twenty-five miles. The chauffeur was using the car as a taxi, a means of making money the Russians call "earning on the left."

Having once tasted the comparative ease and even luxury of the life of a secretary, maid, chauffeur, tutor, or mistress to foreigners, the Russkis are loath to part with it. But the situation has become so threatening in the last year because of the hate-foreigners campaign in the Soviet Union that many Russkis are anxious to withdraw from that glamorous life.

For some it is too late. Many of them succeed only in reaching prison or a concentration camp. Thus, in the course of the last three months before my expulsion seven employees of the American Embassy were arrested and exiled.

The Russkis find themselves trapped. Association with foreigners means, more often than not, the loss of friends and of contacts useful in procuring other jobs. This is a fact, even though Russkis must have the blessing of the secret police before they can be hired by foreigners. If they resign and find a job with a Soviet organization, they must fill out a form recording their previous employment. The words "foreign embassy" or "foreign correspondent" on this form blacklist them almost automatically.

This system hits our secretaries particularly hard, if they wish to leave the now precarious world of the Russkis. They can probably find manual work, but these girls are all linguistically gifted, capable, and somewhat spoiled. The jobs they naturally seek involve translation, research, and even writing—all within the sphere of ideological effort, on which the ruling Communist Party keeps a jealous eye.

These Russki secretaries become desperate when they find there is no hope of getting a suitable job in a Soviet organization, and when the danger hanging over their heads becomes tangible, almost imminent. As I said good-bye to one of them, who stealthily wandered into my office on the day the espionage charge against me appeared in a Moscow paper, she burst into tears, crying: "Where should I go? What should I do? Russia is so big, but there is no place to hide." She well knew the fate of a friend of hers. That girl could stand the strain no longer and deliberately precipitated the end.

A high-ranking U. S. Army officer had become interested in this handsome girl with the bell-like voice, who did secretarial work for a colleague of mine. She had laughed off his advances, but the loss of friends, the inability to find a Soviet

job, and the atmosphere of suspicion and danger finally drove her to her decision.

She flung herself into the arms of the officer. She flaunted her nearness to him, insisting on his taking her out to expensive and well-policed restaurants, to theaters and to the weekly movies shown by the Americans. She begged the other secretaries, chauffeurs, and messenger girls to report on her. Soon enough she was called in to the secret police and ordered to resign from her job. The man she talked to promised to pave the way for her employment by a Soviet organization. She gave her foreign boss, the correspondent, twenty-four hours' notice. Three days later she disappeared.

Her case began the new method of arresting Russkis. The employee is first ordered to resign from his job. He is too frightened to do anything but obey. His name is then crossed off the list of employees of an embassy or a newspaper bureau. Therefore, when he is arrested, the foreign employer is powerless to intercede in his behalf. It is simply none of the foreigner's business!

My former secretary, the practical Cecelia Nelson, must have been grateful in a way for her chance to participate in the frame-up against me. In appreciation of the unenviable part she played in it, the all-powerful M.V.D. must have helped her find employment in a Soviet organization. Thus, she has probably escaped at last the ever-present sword of Damocles—possible arrest and exile.

One after the other the Russkis are now running from non-satellite embassies, particularly those of the Western countries. For some reason the Hindu Embassy is considered as safe as that of a satellite state, and the ambassadress, Madame Pandit, is faced with help problems exactly the opposite of those plaguing our own Walter Bedell Smith.

In a class all by themselves are the young Soviet girls and women whom the down-to-earth American soldiers in Moscow

call the *mozhno* girls. The word "*mozhno*" means in Russian "you may" or "if you wish." And most of these girls are eager to please. As a rule they take the initiative in getting to know the young unmarried men of various embassies and military missions. Some of these girls may have drifted into the *mozhno* profession by mere chance, but the vast majority of them are instructed by the secret police to make contact with the lonesome young men from abroad, spend as much time as possible with them, and report. In return, the M.V.D. keeps its eyes closed to the "un-Soviet developments"—such things as the improvement in the girls' wardrobes, their indulgence in jazz, and their interest in American movies.

There is a rapid turnover among the *mozhno* girls, all of whom disappear from the scene sooner or later, either because they become too attached to the boy friends, or because the sparkle of their costume jewelry and the luster of the lipstick they wear outshine the brilliance of their reports. One of these girls, named Vera, must have been particularly clever. She specialized in military people and was gradually "promoting" herself from privates to sergeants, to lieutenants, and disappeared only after she had made the mistake of becoming too attached to an American captain, her latest catch.

These girls are haunted by their shady pasts in the concentration camps for women to which they are usually sent. Most of the women there are wives of purged Soviet officials, who, along with the male and female guards, scornfully refer to the girls as *inostrankas* (foreign women).

Although the *mozhno* girls are very close to foreigners, in the most literal sense, their conception of the world abroad is tragically insufficient. The only foreigners they ever see or meet are diplomats, the military, visiting firemen, or foreign correspondents, pretty nearly all of them men of the world and men of means, hard-working when the occasion demands, but frequently commanding many hours of leisure. By an easy

trick of logic, these men usually succeed in convincing their own consciences, and sometimes even their bosses, that the time, money, and effort which they spend on these girls helps them to understand better mysterious and enigmatic Russia.

And so, through these polished and worldly men, easy with their money and their presents, the *mozhno* girls, as well as the girls who just happen to meet foreigners and fall in love, get their first and only contact with *zagrannitsa*—the lands beyond the Soviet frontiers. To most of them *zagrannitsa* is one vast Utopia where things are obtained for the asking, and where people do nothing but eat steaks and ice cream, shop, dress up in smart clothes, ride in automobiles, dance, and go to the movies.

In all my twelve years in Russia, I came across only one *mozhno* girl who kept asking all sorts of serious questions about life in the United States. She told me she wanted to go to the United States in order to be with the man she loved, to see the country and learn English.

The highest secret ambition of practically all Soviet girls who meet foreigners, whether they belong to the *mozhno* variety or to the boy-meets-girl class, is to charm the man to the point of making him ask the most wonderful question of all: "Will you marry me?" Several score of them listened to the music of those words during the unforgettable years before March 1947, when a decree forbidding the marriage between Soviet citizens and foreigners was made public. This decree was a heavy blow to the *mozhno* girls, and has excluded practically all other girls from contact with non-Soviet men.

Before the decree, marriage to a foreigner worked wonders for a Russian girl. It almost automatically insured the bride against arrest, at least as long as the husband was in Moscow. It gave her a social and economic position sometimes of dizzying height. For example, a pretty, blue-eyed Russian girl named Helen became the wife of Monsieur Politis, the Greek

ambassador. She lorded it over a small mansion and a dozen servants. She shook hands with Molotov and Vishinsky, received the highest dignitaries of great states, and traveled to Paris to buy clothes. But the ambassador was recalled by his government. The Russians refused his request to take Helen out of the country. Finally he divorced her and soon after that she was arrested and exiled.

Frequently marriage gave to these girls the chance to travel abroad, with the opportunity to remain there or return to the Soviet Union. Until 1942 all wives of foreigners who were allowed to leave the country had to renounce Soviet citizenship. But since 1942, the only way these wives can get out, if permission is granted, is to receive a Soviet passport for travel abroad, with the understanding that they will definitely come back. Otherwise they would be listed as deserters with ensuing retaliation, usually upon their families inside Russia.

Marriage meant to these girls a beautiful church ceremony, a white satin gown, a turnout of glittering diplomats—friends of the husband—interviews with the foreign press, posing for photographs, receptions, dinners, and presents galore.

Finally, as in any country, marriage meant security, a normal healthy home life, in one word, a family—still the most sacred unit of society the world over.

It is against this background that one must evaluate the recent report that two Soviet girls who had succeeded in obtaining permission to go with their husbands to Great Britain have now decided to return to the Soviet Union, leaving their husbands behind. Upon arriving in Moscow the two girls said that five other Russian wives of British subjects were about to follow their example. The reason for their action, they said, was that life in England "is just one round of poverty, unemployment, and starvation." Naturally this episode mystified and disturbed the public in England and America.

But the story cannot be taken at face value.

The girls in question met their future husbands during the war, at a time when the Soviet population lived on a starvation diet and performed miracles. They escaped the hardships of life in wartime Moscow by fleeing to the food and warmth of the British Military Mission. They sported clothes, flown in for them from Teheran and Cairo, before the envious eyes of other Moscow women. Like most Soviet women who marry foreigners, they thought their lives abroad would be incomparably more glamorous.

In England they gained the greatest luxury of all—freedom. But they didn't know what to do with it. All they knew was that the abundance they had known as wartime wives of Britishers in Moscow had suddenly given way to postwar Britain's stark daily life. To add insult to injury, their clothes, which had been the envy of Moscow women, an envy that always delighted them, went unnoticed in London.

Abandoning their husbands whom they had married for better or worse, they proved themselves bad wives. Running away from the drabness and poverty of free England to the no less drab but fettered Russia, they proved themselves unworthy of the freedom that had been given them. The only way they can now find a life of luxury in Moscow is to go in for the seduction of foreigners, men of the world they have just scorned.

Only a few Russian girls who have been left behind have had the courage to remain married to a foreign husband after he has been transferred from the Soviet capital. Most girls who have divorced their foreign husbands have done so to prove their "Soviet patriotism," and thereby avoid persecution and a near-starvation existence. Others have been quick to adapt themselves to new men. The prettiest of them is Galina Dunayeva. Wife of U. S. Army Sergeant John Biconish, she lost no time in reconciling herself to his recall to the States, and turned her attention to twenty-one-year-old Sergeant James



M. McMillin, a code clerk at the military attaché's office in Moscow.

As far as he was concerned, it started as a normal case of a lonely boy meeting an attractive *mozno* girl. No wonder he was lonely. The Soviet authorities had seen to it that he and the two score American boys who lived with them in the American House were cut off from a normal life and normal social contacts. Uniformed policemen were on duty day and night in front of the ungainly building, and plain-clothesmen were numerous enough to keep an eye on every one of the young Americans incarcerated there. No innocent Soviet citizen ever crossed the threshold of that house. Never a man. Only girls, checked and double-checked by the secret police, instructed and warned. Girls and drinks and the dull monotony of a prison without bars.

No one here knows what actually took place. Galina may have threatened to abandon the sergeant, who was madly in love with her. She may have been threatened herself, and have pleaded with him to save her. One hard, irrevocable fact is known: Sergeant McMillin deserted from the U. S. Army and renounced his American citizenship. He may also have turned traitor, if he handed over to the Russians the code he knew and gave them firsthand information on the workings of our embassy in Moscow.

The husbands of the handful of Soviet wives who have remained faithful are, in the meantime, sparing no time, money, or effort to get them out, to send them money and parcels.

I know a young U. S. Army man whose life has been deteriorating for the past two years. Not cooled by time and space, his love has become an all-absorbing obsession, sapping his energies and wasting his considerable talents as an organizer and creative artist. The owner of a beautifully furnished Washington apartment, he invites no one for a meal, a drink, or a friendly chat. "My wife will be my first guest," he says.

Similarly he uses his car only to get his job done. No pleasure rides, no trips to the country for him.

His wife, as lovely a girl as I have ever known, lives in Russia in a state of semiexistence, oblivious to the outside world and indifferent to all the temptations, appeals, and threats that plague her at every step. There is no escape for either of them except reunion. But reunion has been made impossible by the Kremlin, and for this there is no forgiveness.

## Chapter 13

Very few if any foreigners have had the chance to observe high-placed Soviet bureaucrats handling their subordinates. On two separate occasions I was in a position to watch two such men of power in action, the late Politburo member, Alexander Shcherbakov, and the Communist Party secretary of the Novosibirsk Province in the heart of Soviet Asia, Mikhail Kulagin.

My experience with Shcherbakov dates all the way back to 1936, when he held the job of secretary-general of the Writers' Union. I was then collecting and translating into English fairy tales and legends of the Revolution of 1917, remarkable examples of folk poetry of our times. In the process of my research I made the acquaintance and won the friendship of Yuri Matveyevich Sokolov, the dean of Soviet folklorists who died several years ago. A Russian intellectual of the old school, with beautiful steel-gray hair and the crystal-clear, sky-blue eyes of a northern Slav, Sokolov was a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, a university professor, and head of the folklore section of the Writers' Union. Apparently he was trusted completely by the Soviets, for they permitted him to retain his small, unique apartment, crowded to capacity with books, in the red brick building of the Historical Museum that stands at the very entrance to the Red Square.

I spent many hours with Yuri Matveyevich Sokolov in his

study, discussing problems of folk art, primarily the relationship between literature and folklore. He was then doing a book on the subject, and it was from him that I first learned that a Spanish legend as recorded in Washington Irving's *Alhambra* inspired Pushkin to write his *Tale of the Golden Cockerel*. Little did Sokolov suspect then that some eleven years later he would be attacked by a former pupil of his, Victor Sidelnikov, for having mentioned the Pushkin-Irving matter in his book. Sidelnikov denounced Sokolov's remarks as an example of belittling Russia's contribution to world literature and "fawning before things foreign."

One day in 1936 Sokolov invited me to attend a meeting of the Folklore Section of the Writers' Union, in which the secretary general of the Union, Alexander Shcherbakov, was to participate. A few years later Shcherbakov was promoted to alternate membership in the Politburo, and became wartime chief of the Soviet Information Bureau and head of the Propaganda Section of the Red Army.

Shcherbakov was a towering fat man with a ruthless intelligence in his dark brown eyes. There was a crushing drive about him, a fierce capacity for work which sent him and a number of men working under him to early graves. He achieved miracles of production in the steel and mining areas of the Ukraine and Siberia, whither he was transferred from his Writers' Union job. But Soviet men of letters thought him a failure when he worked among them. And I could see why as I watched him at the meeting of the Folklore Section.

The editors of *Pravda* were then preparing for publication a volume of Soviet folklore that was to glorify the achievements of the U.S.S.R. and, above all, Stalin. The Folklore Section had sent out expeditions to all the far-flung corners of the Soviet Union to gather material for the book, by recording songs and tales of the bards of Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Ukraine, and other Soviet republics. It was evident from

Sokolov's report that material was slow in coming in, made slower still by the work involved in checking the authenticity of that material. He also disclosed that the lion's share of the worth-while songs and tales was devoted to Lenin. The Stalin material lacked the inspiration, the spontaneity and beauty that have gone into the creation of Lenin folklore.

After listening to the report and the discussion that followed, with eyes glued to the blank sheet of paper on the table in front of him, Shcherbakov took the floor and castigated Sokolov and his learned colleagues.

They weren't good folklorists or good patriots, he contended, because they could not produce what was expected of them for such an important medium as the *Pravda* volume. They ought to learn from the Stakhanovites of fields and factories. He pointed out that thousands of workers produce over a year's quota by the date of the celebration of the great social revolution on November 7. But the folklorists were failing. Especially grave was their unpatriotic failure to collect in sufficient numbers inspiring songs and tales about the legendary figure of the Great Leader.

"But, Comrade Shcherbakov," interceded Sokolov, "one cannot produce folk songs and legends the way one produces grain and manufactures tractors."

Shcherbakov, who up to that moment had not addressed his criticism to anyone in particular, now hurled the full weight of his invective against Sokolov, thundering in conclusion:

"And you, Secretary of the Folklore Section, bear a greater responsibility than anyone else."

Sokolov got red in the face.

"You forget, Comrade Shcherbakov, I am not Secretary. I guide the work of the section, its theoretical inquiries."

"Then you guide the work badly, without Bolshevik determination and without a clear-cut understanding of the aims. I want a report from you within two weeks, and I want results."

"I resign, Comrade Shcherbakov."

"You will resign when I tell you to. The meeting is over."

When the book came out, a lavish edition with a Stalin section that was huge but incomparably less inspiring than the one devoted to Lenin, Sokolov's name was not mentioned as one of the editors. And he was no longer heading the Folklore Section of the Writers' Union.

Mikhail Kulagin is the boss of Siberia, one of the most important Kremlin stalwarts outside Moscow. He looks like James Cagney, slaps people on the back like a Tammany politician, and is as hard-driving as a Chicago tycoon. Combining Communist phraseology and a feudal lord's unlimited power and ruthlessness, Mike has converted Novosibirsk into a powerful industrial and railway center which during the war nearly doubled its population of 450,000.

Novosibirsk attracted some of the most important American wartime visitors to the Soviet Union, including the former Vice-President, Henry Wallace, and ex-President of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce Eric Johnston, who went there accompanied by his assistant Joyce O'Hara, author and publisher William L. White, and four of the foreign correspondents permanently stationed in Moscow: Harrison Salisbury (*UP*), William Lawrence (*New York Times*), Richard E. Lauterbach (*Time and Life*), and myself.

During the trip we were all tremendously impressed by the superhuman patience, effort, and sacrifices of the Soviet people, and could not but pay tribute to the men and women of Russia who had forged the victory, working with dignity and with well-earned pride in their effort. We were humble in the face of the poverty and the exertion of the people, and the men who led them in their work. I was, therefore, completely unprepared for the humiliation to which Mike subjected one of the most important of these men.

Alexander Kotliar, tall, handsome, and young (thirty-six), was director of Russia's greatest optical Plant, No. 69, which had been evacuated from Moscow in 1941, and started shipping binoculars, telescopes, and lenses for Red Army guns twenty-two days after the plant's arrival in Novosibirsk. It had employed seven thousand workers in Moscow, of which about four thousand were evacuated along with the plant; its total employment in Novosibirsk rose to fifteen thousand. Seventy per cent of them were women and girls.

As we entered Kotliar's office for an interview, accompanied by Mike, we noticed a magnificent inkwell, a gift from twelve girls who had worked on it for over a year during their spare time. We all admired it, and so did Eric Johnston. Mike immediately announced that the inkwell was thereby presented to his distinguished guest, and asked Kotliar to see that it was delivered to Johnston's room at the Communist Party country place where we were all living. Pale with shock, the owner of the inkwell nodded and said nothing. The inkwell had not arrived by the time of Mike's farewell banquet in Johnston's honor. It was the eve of our departure and the party was lavish and gay, with speeches, a floor show, songs and dancing.

I was sitting next to the director of the optical plant, who complained that he missed the cultural life of the capital and was waiting impatiently for the completion of the forty-million-ruble opera house which, now nearly finished, had been under construction since 1932. Suddenly Mike, who had been prancing about the room discharging merriment and vitality, dashed up to the director and inquired whether the inkwell had been sent to Johnston.

"Not yet," said Kotliar. "I forgot all about it."

Mike unloosened a string of curses, ordering him to leave immediately and fetch the inkwell. No, not his chauffeur. Himself. The swine! The bastard son of his defiled mother!

The director jumped to his feet. For a moment it looked as

if he were going to swing on Mike. Instead he ran out of the room.

I was so upset by the scene that I never inquired of Johnston whether the inkwell was actually delivered to him or not. And I did not mention the matter to him, knowing full well that he would have refused the gift under these circumstances, thus possibly making things worse for the director. Besides, Johnston had his hands full fighting off the offer of another gift from the willful Mike. That gift was a small fortune in jewels, over fifty of them, including a number of magnificent diamonds and rubies. Johnston felt he could not accept the jewels and nothing he said could convince Mike that the gift was too lavish.

At a frantic last-minute conference Bill White suggested a way out and it worked. A few minutes before we left for the airport Johnston called Mike into his room and, as he told us later, asked him whether he believed in Party discipline. Of course Mike did. Stalin did. Lenin did.

And so did Eric Johnston, and the Republican Party to which he belonged. And Republican Party discipline forbade the acceptance of large gifts from foreign citizens. "Therefore, Mike, I must return these beautiful jewels to you, regretfully, and with thanks."

Mike knew he was licked, and accepted his defeat with the magnanimity of a medieval lord. As he took back the jewels he said that they would be waiting in distant Novosibirsk for Eric to claim when Republican Party discipline permitted. And they would grow in size and number.

During that same wild party on the eve of our departure Mike backed me into a corner and said:

"The fatherland calls! The fatherland calls, I am telling you. We know all about you, how you were a tsarist officer in the first World War and how you fought against us. You were



bad, you were tough, and we hated you. But now is the time to forgive and forget. The fatherland calls! You'd look splendid in a Red Army uniform with three stars. I'll give you three stars and make you a colonel."

"There must be some mistake. I never was in any army. And I was too young even to be a private in that war."

"You speak Russian like a tsarist officer, and I know a tsarist officer when I see one. Not a day passed during the Civil War without my killing one or two of your kind. But now is the chance to come back. The last chance."

"You are drunk, Mike."

"Maybe I am, but I hear the call of the fatherland!"

And he walked away from me swaying like a leaf of grass in the wind.

Next morning, just as we were leaving for the airport after a million handshakes, Mike came up to the car in which I was sitting, looked at me harshly, and said: "Fatherland calls, you bastard tsarist officer!"

## Chapter 14

The loss of the friendship of Danilov and his daughter was the greatest casualty Nila and I suffered in the cold war.

We first met the Danilov family some ten years ago, and kept seeing them frequently through the years of the Great Purge and after, until late in 1947.

By that time there were only two left of the Danilov family of four: the father, literary critic and playwright, and Masha, twenty-two-year-old student at the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages. His wife, Olga, a singer of some prominence in Moscow's far from illustrious musical-comedy world, was killed in the fall of 1943 by a German bomb while she was performing for Red Army troops at the front. Their only son, Vladimir, a radio technician, had volunteered for work behind enemy lines, was parachuted to the guerrilla area in the Bryansk Forests, and has not been heard from since.

Owing to poor health, Osip Danilov was not permitted to work on an army paper, as he had wanted to, and was instead evacuated to Kuibyshev, where I used to see much of him and his growing daughter.

They came back to Moscow at about the same time that Nila returned from her four-year stay in the United States, and our friendship with the Danilov family, saddened by the loss of Olga and Vladimir, was resumed.

Soon after the hate-America campaign was launched at the

end of 1946, I suggested to Danilov that we discontinue our visits to his place, a small, tastefully furnished two-room apartment, a luxury in overcrowded Moscow. Despite our friendship, neither he nor Masha ever dared to visit us.

I had suggested the same thing to all my other Russian friends, and most of them accepted with bitter, silent gratitude. But Osip insisted that it was just a campaign, only a passing phase. Besides, he knew me well enough as a fair, objective observer, he said, not to fear that anything bad might come to him or his daughter because of our friendship.

So we continued to see them, though at increasingly rarer intervals.

It must have been early summer of 1947 when I first became aware that gloom had taken possession of Osip, banishing his good talk and destroying his hitherto inexhaustible fund of stories and anecdotes in which the Russians poke fun at themselves and their lot.

I did not pay much attention to Osip's state of mind, attributing it to his worries over a play he had been commissioned to write for a leading Moscow theater. As I realized only later, one thing did bother me subconsciously. In contrast with many previous occasions when he was working on a major assignment, he never discussed the play with me and kept changing the subject whenever it managed to creep into the conversation.

One late afternoon I dropped in at the Danilovs' after a particularly long interval. Masha was alone. She seemed embarrassed when she saw me. I made an attempt to withdraw, saying I'd drop in again some other time when her father was home, but she suddenly said:

"Please don't go. I must talk to you. My father has finished his play. It's about America. I've just got through reading it, and I am ashamed of my own father, for the first time in my life."

"Is it something like *The Russian Question*?"

I was referring to a play by Konstantin Simonov about American journalists, depicting the members of the Fourth Estate as degenerates ready to sell their souls for greenbacks, with the few honest men among them either losing their jobs or driven to suicide. Always the first to supply a play, novel, or poem on the topic of the day, Simonov now derides Americans.

"Masha, is your father's play something like *The Russian Question*?"

"It is worse, much worse. Maybe Simonov actually believes in what he wrote. But I do know that my father does not believe in what he has written. He brought me up on Mark Twain, Jack London, and Ernest Hemingway. He made me believe they are America, and I grew up with a love for it. It was he who talked me into specializing in the English language and American literature. And I don't regret it. And now he wrote that foul play. He has done it because he is afraid. I know he is afraid. He has been criticized at the Writers' Union for having a servile attitude toward America and its decaying culture. That's what they said at the meeting, and now he wrote that play showing Americans to be robots whose only human feeling is fear of losing their jobs. I know he does not believe it. I know. I know."

She was silent for a moment, and then, with tears in her eyes: "I wish I had a room somewhere, so I could move out of here."

I was standing there, enraged and helpless. Finally I said: "Masha, may I kiss you good-by?"

She looked up at me and understood. I kissed her and left, feeling that I was running away from a responsibility, but knowing only too well that this was the only thing I could do, unless I wanted to bring disaster to these people whom I loved so dearly.

I never went back to see them, nor did Nila, after I told her of my conversation with Masha.

But on our last night in Moscow, walking home from Spasso House, our thoughts drifted to the Danilovs. "What are they thinking of us now? Do they believe I was a spy? Was I in their eyes an enemy of their people, their enemy?"

In the months since we had seen them the hate-America campaign had covered every conceivable field of art, and everywhere Americans were represented as warmongers, cheapskate amateurs stealing ideas and patents from the Russians. Had the campaign done anything to the Danilovs?

We decided to telephone them. Even though we made sure no one was following us, we walked for a half hour away from our house, looking for a public telephone booth so located that we could quickly see whether anyone was eavesdropping. Finally we found ourselves in the subway station of the Park of Culture and Rest, and phoned from there. It was already past midnight, but Osip and Masha were not asleep. He picked up the receiver and Nila said:

"Good evening, Osip Petrovich."

"As always, your voice sounds like an organ, and as always, I am happy to hear it," he said.

"We are leaving tomorrow for America and we wanted to say good-by, both of us. Robert is with me."

"Please tell Robert that we love you both."

And he hung up.

## Chapter 15

Alexander Vertinsky started his concert career shortly before World War I, possessing a small soulful voice and magically expressive hands. Author of the words and music to all his songs, Vertinsky sang of distant lands, azure clouds, exotic parrots whispering the fatal "*jamais, jamais*," and of the bittersweet romances of actresses and poets.

When the Revolution came, Vertinsky ran away from its brutality and roamed the world, singing wherever Russian émigrés led their artificial, homesick existences.

In the meantime, in the land of the Soviets which he hated but would have given his right arm to see again, his name and his singing had become a legend. Records of his decadent, nostalgic songs grew in value until they were worth their weight in gold.

The records became so popular in new Russia that Soviet diplomats and members of Soviet military and trade missions would flock to his concerts whenever they were lucky enough to find themselves in the cities in which he was scheduled to sing. Somewhat shamefacedly they would tell their resident friends and colleagues that they wanted to see with their own eyes the limit of the degeneration of a capitalist culture which put up with the decadence of Alexander Vertinsky. Whereupon the residents would readily join them. Their proletarian consciences would be appeased by the sight of half-filled halls,

but their souls, in which lingered remnants of bourgeois depravity, secretly responded to Vertinsky's songs.

When the war came Vertinsky donated so generously from well-invested funds to Russian War Relief in various countries that his homesick body soon found itself on the way back to Moscow. When he arrived at the Soviet capital and stepped out of the railway station, he looked at the beautified city and exclaimed: "Mother Russia, I do not recognize you!" Then he put on the ground the two elegant suitcases he carried, kneeled and kissed the sacred soil of his fatherland. When he rose he discovered that both suitcases had been stolen. He then exclaimed: "I do recognize you, oh, Mother Russia!"

He soon made up for his loss, for his success with Moscow audiences was as great as it was unexplainable, since by that time he had become an indecent caricature of the Vertinsky of those earlier triumphs. He now has the false teeth, dull, sunken eyes, and the trembling voice of an old man. But such is the Russian enigma that it is as difficult to buy a ticket to a Vertinsky concert as to a performance of *The Cherry Orchard* at the Moscow Art Theater or *Swan Lake* at the Bolshoi.

His audiences are the most remarkable ones in the Soviet capital, ranging from military and bureaucrats to elderly ladies with old-fashioned velvet collars on their outmoded dresses, including many girls, some young students, and a few workers.

Sometimes a realistic youngster laughs at the sight of Vertinsky on the stage, but is hushed up by the rest of the audience, which soon dreamily becomes absorbed in the sound of Vertinsky moaning, "It Happened in Distant, Lilac-Blue Singapore."

There is a story that Vertinsky's success prompted an enterprising member of the Committee on Arts to suggest that young singers be trained in the Vertinsky manner. But nothing came of the idea after Stalin remarked dryly: "One Vertinsky is plenty."

## Chapter 16

By the time expulsion came we had lost all our Russian friends. Some of them were dead. Some had been purged. Some had given us up. And the rest we ourselves dropped—for their own sakes. Roughly eighteen months before, when it had become dangerous for Russians to associate with Americans, we had called on our friends to say farewell for good, even though we were all to remain in Moscow, the only city on earth where two worlds exist side by side, so completely, so belligerently isolated from each other. There were no farewell parties at those partings, no flowers or champagne. Only a hopeless embrace and unshed tears.

It had all started so differently for me in the middle thirties. Relations between men were established on the universal principle of mutual liking, of common interests, of a give-and-take of minds and souls. It was normal to be befriended by a Russian family, or to invite a girl to a theater, and then take her out even to such a conspicuous place as Café National in the heart of Moscow, which boasted of being the only establishment in the Soviet Union serving American style apple pie.

Among those who had been purged was Semyon Yakovlevich Golovenko, whom I met on a night in December 1935 at the Vakhtangov Theater where they were playing *Much Ado About Nothing*. The performance had an amazing vitality about it, resulting in an ovation that was itself an exhilarating performance.



The man who was sitting on my right almost deafened me as he kept shouting "Bravo! Bravo!" after each curtain. He was a huge man in his late forties, with graying black hair and laughing black eyes under bushy eyebrows.

As I discovered later, he was possessed by an almost childish curiosity about all sorts of gadgets, of which there are so few in Russia. But I did not know it at the time, and was somewhat annoyed at the roaring giant who, for all his absorption in the play and in his own part in the ovation that followed each act, kept watching me take notes. I had a combination fountain pen and pencil. I wrote with the pencil and used the pen to underscore certain phrases and words. It was thanks to the pen-pencil that I met Semyon Yakovlevich Golovenko and his family.

He was going to ask me about the pen during the first intermission but the little dark woman who was with him kept saying that it was "indecent," and dragged him away under the pretext of wanting to have a pastry. But after the second intermission, the moment the ovation died down he said, pointing to the pen: "This is *Amerikanski*?" "Yes, it is." I showed him how it worked, and challenged him to find the place for the lead refills which was so skillfully camouflaged by the cap that few persons suspected it of being there. He could not find it, but would not let me tell him. It was thus that when the show was over Golovenko invited me to come to his home with him and his wife, Zinaida Mironovna, for a bite of food and a cup of tea. The bite proved to be a three-course supper, and the cup of tea proved to be tea plus a couple of quarter-glassfuls of vodka.

Golovenko finally succeeded in discovering the secret of the refills, but I never managed to light the lighter which he showed me, much to his glee.

From that night on I frequented his house, and it became almost a second home for me, until late 1938 when he was arrested, one of the last victims of the Great Purge.

Golovenko was born and grew up in Nikolayev, a major shipbuilding center in the Ukraine. He was a third-generation shipbuilder, who began to help his father at the age of ten, not only at carpentry but also in the dangerous job of spreading revolutionary leaflets among the workers. His father was caught red-handed and exiled to Siberia where he died, leaving his son to support the family and carry on the struggle against tsarism. Despite his youth and lack of education, Golovenko joined Lenin's Bolshevik Party a couple of years after the abortive revolution of 1905, fought Kerensky in 1917, and was appointed the first Bolshevik director of Nikolayev's shipbuilding industry. Two years later he begged off to go to Moscow to study.

Then, during the period of collectivization of agriculture, he was one of the twenty-five thousand city Bolsheviks who were sent to the villages to help establish the collective farms. Some of them were killed by recalcitrant peasants, some remained on the land as chairmen of farms or directors of machine-tractor stations. But the majority, including Golovenko, returned to city life, after helping to carry out a major revolution in the country's agriculture, in which, incidentally, at least a million peasants and a large part of Russia's cattle perished.

Golovenko wanted to return to his interrupted studies, but, as a Communist, could not refuse when the Party appointed him director of the largest truck and auto repair plant in Moscow. "Let our children study," he was told. "We must build a socialist world for them to live in."

But Golovenko could not stop studying. His prodigious energy and no less prodigious curiosity led him to read more and more books. He was always discovering new interests. A born leader of men, he was successful in everything he undertook. Big and generous, he listened to the experts in whatever field he was working in, and succeeded where others failed.

A chauffeur-driven car which went with his job called for him at seven-thirty every morning. From eight to nine he received foremen, engineers, the heads of supplies and of personnel. From nine to ten he took lessons in mathematics, and then an hour for English. Geometry was tough going for him, but he made amazing strides in English, his heavy Ukrainian-Russian accent notwithstanding, because he wanted to read Jack London in the original.

An experienced and impatient organizer, he managed the two thousand workers under him with the skill and shrewdness of a Detroit capitalist. When I mentioned to him that American labor unions were fighting the piecework system which had become prevalent in Soviet industry and was to be introduced in collectivized agriculture on an ever wider scale, he said: "Good for the American workers. Let them fight the piecework system. It makes a man work harder. But we don't slave for capitalists. We are building socialism. We must catch up with and outstrip America. We shall then bring about a life of such abundance that our children and their children will immortalize us in legends."

He was especially clever and unscrupulously "capitalistic" in handling the "Director's Fund." The head of each Soviet enterprise has at his disposal a certain percentage of accumulated profits, called Director's Fund. He is to spend the money on prizes, educational undertakings, and on banquets to celebrate the fulfillment of the plan or some Soviet holiday or other. He rarely indulged in any of these celebrations, and the May 1 and November 7 decorations for his plant's column in the march past the Lenin Mausoleum on the Red Square were very modest. Unlike most Soviet bureaucrats, he studied the habits, needs, and interests of the leading, as well as the lagging, workers. In a man-to-man talk at the lathe, or while helping take a wrecked car apart—he was very handy with tools—he would discover that a group of young workers were

dreaming of a boat trip down the Volga. He would then get involved in their plans, study the map with them, get enthusiastic over the possibility of getting a motor to go back by river, and would end up with a proposition. He would get a boat and a motor for them, and give each one an extra vacation week if they would step up production by so many per cent, and challenge Vasya Smirnov's brigade to socialist competition. Vasya's brigade was not interested in anything so romantic as a Volga trip, but did show enthusiasm when Golovenko promised each member a two-week stay at the plant's rest home near Moscow, if the brigade won.

The brigade won and he was as good as his word. But the contest turned up a new and more efficient technique. The basis for piecework was then changed, with the plant producing more at smaller expense.

Golovenko especially endeared himself to the women working in his plant by building a crèche where they could leave their infants under the care of a nurse. There were about fifty infants, twice as many as the crèche could take care of, and Golovenko laid down the iron rule that those who produced most should be given preference.

The longer I knew the man, the closer I was drawn by his handsome, magnetic presence. He, apparently, took to me, too, and he trusted me, although I was a foreigner in his country. As a matter of fact, after my first few years in the Soviet Union, I came to the conclusion that most of the Russians who took me into their confidence did so just because I was a foreigner, and therefore would not be tempted, or be under pressure, to report them to "competent" authorities.

Golovenko never invited me to his plant, but I probably knew more about it from his stories than most of the people working there. I knew that it received the banner of the automobile industry as Russia's most efficiently run auto repair plant; that nineteen-year-old Mitya, who was nicknamed

*Amerikanets* for his inventiveness, joined the brigade that wanted to take the Volga trip, and they were definitely to make it that coming summer; that Golovenko, possibly under the influence of my tales of working conditions in United States factories, was planning to substitute modern plumbing for the evil-smelling outhouses. They had regular toilets only at the clubhouse, and these were usually so overcrowded that their conditions was only one step removed from that of the outhouses.

I also learned that Golovenko was having trouble. It started with the crèche. One worker, a member of the Communist Party, wrote a letter to the Party Committee of the plant, charging the director with discrimination against Communists, since Stakhanovites, the best workers but not necessarily Party members, comprised the first group of factory employees whose children were placed in the crèche.

Now the Party Committee, elected at local meetings of Communists, is a vital factor in the life of every Soviet enterprise. It has no executive power, and its job is to help work out plans of production, assist the director in reaching objectives, conduct cultural and propaganda work, and step in whenever there is trouble. The director has ultimate executive power, although he is subject to Party discipline and has to be approved by the District Communist Committee Party. In cases where the plant is of national significance the approval has to come from the Central Committee itself. The secretary of the Party Committee is usually a full-time functionary, reporting directly to the District Committee.

The secretary who had it in for Golovenko because of his independence and restlessness could not support the charge of discrimination against Communists, since "Stakhanovites first" was the Party line, but he inserted a sentence into the resolution, reprimanding Golovenko for "neglect of toilers who are Communist Party members." He also added a phrase

about "excessive indulgence in American methods of running the plant."

A copy of the resolution went to the District Committee and was placed in the file on Golovenko. A couple of months later it played a fatal role in crushing his cherished dream of a trip to America. A group of automobile industry executives and engineers were to be sent to Detroit. Golovenko had been interviewed and approved by the executive end, and now it was up to the General Committee. That committee sent for the District Committee files. The final answer was no.

Golovenko also had his problems at home. His wife, Zinaida Mironovna, came, like himself, from a family of shipbuilders. Unlike her husband, she had a high school education and considered herself a woman of culture. Zinaida felt that she was far superior to her husband, though by the time I got to know them he was head and shoulders above her in experience and in the wealth of knowledge he had accumulated. They had met and fallen in love in a revolutionary circle, and had two children, a boy and a girl. The boy Seryozha (Sergei) became an artist, married young, and lived away from the family, and the daughter was then about fifteen, a high school girl dreaming of work as a radio operator in the Far North.

Zinaida had shared the hardships and dangers of her husband's life prior to the Revolution, through the Civil War, and during the period of reconstruction. But a change came over her at the time of his transfer to the village. She missed the theaters, the comparatively well-dressed people, the plumbing, "culture." She wanted the warmth of a home and was constantly dreaming of how she was going to furnish it. She wanted rugs, a set of dishes, central heating, a bath, and running hot water. She was tired of working for the future.

Golovenko's job as director was the answer to her prayers. A four-room apartment in a new building, and a car with a chauffeur at his disposal day and night, came with the job. He

earned three thousand rubles a month at a time when an average worker's wage was under five hundred. And, last but not least, because of his position, she could gain entrance to the Central Atelier Mod, that fabulous tailoring establishment which created models for mass production by government factories, and accepted as their clients only wives of "responsible Comrades," well-known actresses and, until about a year ago, wives of foreign diplomats.

The girls at the Atelier Mod, I learned from Zinaida Mironovna, enjoyed sewing for foreign women because they usually provided excellent quality material, because they presented the Atelier with copies of the latest European and American fashion magazines, and because they had better figures.

Ukrainian girls on the whole are more attractive and better built than their Russian sisters, and Zinaida in her youth must have stood out even among Ukrainian girls. She still was good to look at when I first met her, but her small, once probably enticing figure was losing its shape because of the good food at her home.

Having discovered the world of the Atelier Mod, Zinaida Mironovna adopted it with the same passion that her husband accepted the world of trucks and automobiles. Still in love with Zinaida, he tolerated her interest in clothes, regarding it as a passing fancy, and tried, whenever he could, to send her to the Atelier by car, instructing the chauffeur to wait until she was through with the fitting. That was the custom for the wives of Soviet bureaucrats, whom the Russians politely call "responsible Comrades." One day the secretary of the Party Committee asked for the car, but it was waiting for Zinaida, and, silent but angry, he had to take the streetcar. From that day on she had to come home by trolley bus, although the car did take her to the Atelier.

The only thing that reconciled her to the change was her discovery that the wife of Politburo member Mikoyan never

had a car wait for her. As a matter of fact, that handsome Armenian woman walked over from the Kremlin whenever she had a fitting, and walked back afterward.

Zinaida was always full of stories about the doings at the Atelier. One day it was about the capricious movie star, Lyubov Orlova, who thought herself the best-dressed woman in Moscow. Orlova was horrified at the emergence of a dangerous competitor, Tatyana Fyodorova, a former soil digger who worked such miracles with her shovel and with organizing the work of the other girls digging the Moscow subway that she was sent to school, became an engineer, and was elected to the Supreme Soviet, Russia's parliament.

Another day it was a story about Marshal Voroshilov's wife, who happened to see the wife of a diplomat emerge from the fitting room with a beautiful dress and insisted on having one just like it made for her. Unfortunately Madame Voroshilov was built along sturdy lines whereas the diplomat's wife was very slim. In an attempt to keep her from ordering the dress, the modiste remarked tactfully that it was conceived "to hide the bones of the lady, who was dry as a stick."

Zinaida also told how she discovered that Mikoyan, who is now Minister of Foreign Trade and was then Russia's "food Tsar" (Commissar of the Food Industry), did not have a refrigerator in his Kremlin apartment. Zinaida heard Madame Mikoyan telephone from the Atelier, saying that she would not be home for lunch, and adding: "The meat is outside the window." Practically all Russians keep their food in a box attached to the outside of a window. Curiously enough, Soviet-made refrigerators were among the first commodities on unrationed sale after the war, sold at the ruble equivalent of three hundred and fifty dollars.

In spite of our close friendship and Golovenko's confidence in me, there was one topic that he found difficult to discuss with me—the purge. I was covering the trials and could spare



little time for friends during that period. Whenever I dropped in, however, the family would shower questions on me: how were the defendants dressed, how did they behave, what was the reaction of the audience? This information no Soviet paper ever offers its readers. Golovenko could have gotten a ticket for one of the sessions, but would not. He left it to the others to ask the questions but listened intently, his handsome face grim and dark.

Despite his silence, I soon discovered that he was much more interested in my reports of purge trials throughout the country than in the overpublicized trials of top Party men in Moscow. At that time correspondents were allowed to subscribe to papers outside Moscow, and every day I saw over thirty newspapers from all the important cities of the U.S.S.R., especially from the various republic capitals. There was very little to read in those papers, except for a few local items on the last page, page 4. In the period between the end of 1936 and the middle of 1938 many of these local items contained reports of purge trials, confessions, and sentences. The reports helped create an over-all picture of the vastness of the purge, since each reported trial stood for tens of thousands of unreported arrests and convictions. Behind each conviction stood a broken home, with the wives of the arrested men exiled to settlements in the Far North and Far East, or placed in huge concentration camps for women. Their children were placed in government institutions where they were told that their fathers were "enemies of the people" and had better be forgotten. The friends of the family rarely took the children in, even if they were eager to do so, because such an act would be interpreted as failure to condemn an "enemy." Even relatives turned away in fear.

As he listened to my reports of the purges outside Moscow, Golovenko would ask me questions from time to time on seemingly unrelated subjects—on construction jobs in outlying dis-

tricts, particularly railways. He ignored the question which bothered me most—the psychological riddle of the confessions. Once, when I told him of a report in an Academy of Sciences periodical, outlining a plan to develop the vast coal deposits in the Pechora Basin, he said:

“It may well be that my bones will rot in the mines of the Basin, and yet I shall die a Communist. We must bring to life the entire wealth of our land. We shall then have more abundance and fewer bureaucrats.”

Day after day, as I talked with him and other Soviet Communists, I watched the mental processes of the Golovenkos. Possibly a Communist can understand their psychology. I must admit that I could never fully follow their reasoning.

He may not have realized that he had given me a clue to the psychological problem that bothered me. But his words made me suspect what I learned later. During the war the Soviets announced the creation of a new major addition to the coal industry—the Vorkuta coal in the Pechora Basin—and the construction of the fifteen-hundred-mile-long Pechora Railway. I learned that both projects were built by prison labor.

I do not know whether Golovenko's bones are rotting in that area, but I do know that he was arrested and exiled shortly after our conversation. Like most people arrested at that time, he simply disappeared. He had left for the plant in the morning and never returned. The one answer given to all inquiries made by his family was that he was convicted and exiled without the right to send or receive letters. No one has heard from or about him since. The N.K.V.D. also arrested Zinaida Mironovna. They came in the middle of the night, made a thorough search, and took her away with them. The apartment and all belongings were confiscated, and the daughter Maria moved in with her brother. She soon fell in love with a wireless operator with the Northern Sea Route Administration and followed

him north. She was killed by a German bomb in Murmansk.

As a rule, wives of arrested and condemned "enemies of the people" were also subject to detention. The secret police would come with a warrant for arrest. After waiting in the prison cell for varying periods, the wives, usually without being questioned, would one day be shown excerpts from a protocol of an N.K.V.D. collegium to the effect that Citizen So-and-so, as wife of a traitor to the people, has been sentenced to a corrective labor camp for three, five, or ten years.

The women were not given a hearing, nor were they given the opportunity to appeal the sentence.

My friendship with Golovenko's son, Seryozha, and his wife, Tanya, developed parallel to the friendship between his father and me, and I kept up my contacts with the young Golovenkos until 1946, when Nila and I said farewell to them for fear of harming them.

It was from Seryozha that I learned bits of information about his mother and her life at the concentration camp. She was sentenced to ten years of "corrective labor," with the privilege of writing and receiving censored letters. If she survived and was released, as she should have been early in 1948, she would be allowed to settle at a place at least sixty miles from Moscow. There are thousands upon thousands of such women living in the environs of the capital, occasionally paying a one- or two-day visit there, with or without permission, in the hope of finding out something about their husbands, children, or friends.

All who have been inmates of concentration camps have a stamped statement to that effect on their passports. In addition, they receive documents stating that they have served a sentence and are hereby permitted to reside anywhere in the Soviet Union. But more often than not, they are barred from establishing residence in the largest Russian cities, and each of these cities is listed. Thus you might hear a Soviet citizen

say that his mother has been released with "minus seven," meaning that she has no right to reside in the seven largest Soviet cities, or within a radius of one hundred kilometers (roughly sixty miles) of those cities. There is a railway station, Petushki (Little Roosters), located exactly one hundred and one kilometers from Moscow, with a little settlement around it. Beginning with the early forties, when the first persons, mostly women, were returning from the camps, Petushki began to grow, until by now it is a sizable community with a terrific housing shortage and an abundance of tired, sad, and frequently well-educated new settlers.

Upon arrival from the camps, the ex-inmates must first register with the local M.V.D. This procedure cannot be avoided because, as mentioned previously, no one in the Soviet Union can reside anywhere without first registering with the militia, and the militia would refuse to register former prisoners until after they had paid their call to the M.V.D. After these formalities have been taken care of, the ex-inmates become equal members of the community. With the exception of important executive, administrative, or Party jobs, there is nothing to prevent these people from returning to their previous occupations.

Most significantly, the local community accepts them on a basis of equality without hesitation.

One of these women called on Seryozha in 1943. He was in the army, but for some reason never was sent to the front. Instead he was kept busy on the camouflaging of Krasnaya Presnia, an important industrial district of the Soviet capital. The woman was cautious, but still added considerably to what Seryozha had learned from his mother's letters.

His mother was one of several thousand women who were dumped on the rich virgin steppeland of Karaganda in central Asia. There was no barbed wire, but the vast distances and the heat made escape impossible. With a little lumber and a

few tools, using mostly the clay that abounded there, they built barracks for themselves and then launched the construction of a gigantic cattle and grain farm.

The first week was the worst. There was no water, and they had to dig wells under the scorching sun of Karaganda. Sanitation, as in most of Russia to this present day, was a problem as difficult to solve as the puzzles of postwar peace. There seemed to be no end to back-breaking toil. The older and weaker women began to die off at a staggering rate. There were only two doctors for the entire camp, since most doctors under arrest were sent to the concentration camps for men, who were doing incomparably harder labor under even worse conditions.

Here was where the steel that was in Zinaida Mironovna began to show. Heartbroken and exhausted, she herself nearly died during the first week, but the plight of the older and weaker women spurred her on to try to alleviate their suffering. Speaking the warm, soft language of the Ukrainians, she sold two ideas to the commandant of the concentration camp, an old M.V.D. man from Kiev. The first idea was to release one woman from each of the barracks—there were forty occupants in each—for two hours each afternoon over a period of three weeks to learn something about nursing in the first-aid classes which the two doctors were willing to conduct.

The second idea was to build a shop for sewing underwear for the Red Army where the weaker women could work indoors, protected from the scorching sun. Most of the other concentration camps for women did nothing but sewing, including embroidered tablecloths, shirts, and towels later sold in large cities at enormous profit by the M.V.D. This camp, however, was supposed to be only a gigantic state farm, and Zinaida Mironovna sold the idea of underwear for the Red Army as "an act of patriotism." Many of the women who were assigned to that task would not have survived otherwise.

Whether out of tenderness for a fellow Ukrainian, or because he felt she deserved it, the commandant appointed Zinaida Mironovna foreman of the shop, sparing her from toil under the scorching sun. Inside the shop, for greater efficiency, as she explained to the chief, but in reality as a measure of escape and relaxation, she assigned three former actresses to read aloud from the works of Russian classics and Soviet writers. Two of these actresses, by the way, hated each other, but sometimes would cry despairingly in each other's arms. One had been exiled because she was the wife and the other because she was the mistress of an important henchman of Yagoda, former N.K.V.D. chief who himself was tried and executed as an enemy of the people.

The recitals brought a great deal of pleasure to the women working in Zinaida Mironovna's shop, and at night they would relate the stories to the inmates of their respective barracks. An incident resulting from the reading of a passage in *Anna Karenina* nearly brought about the end of all recitals, and even threatened the existence of the shop itself. The passage described the scene between Anna and her little boy after she stole into his room despite Karenin's orders. This scene, one of the most touching and tender in all world literature, evoked memories the women had been vainly struggling to forget. All the wounds opened up. The women stopped working. Most of them wept bitterly. Some began to scream in their despair. Two or three tore to pieces the material they were handling. Zinaida Mironovna, who herself was weeping as she listened to the scene, kept her self-control but could do nothing to restore order. More and more women were caught by the whirlpool of hysteria.

Suddenly a voice rose about the chaos of despair. The actress who had read the piece, and who had been parted from her only child, began to sing a lullaby. She sang quietly, with her eyes half closed, a happy smile on her face, her arms

folded, as if she were holding a baby. She was completely absorbed in herself, not trying to do anything about anyone else in the room, but one by one the women started to listen to her, until only her voice remained in the entire shop. Zinaida Mironovna quietly started everyone back to work, but the actress never stopped her singing. It was only afterward that they discovered that she had gone mad. The guards removed her two days later and no one knew what became of her.

No one knew either who reported the incident to the chief, but he called in Zinaida Mironovna and ordered her to put an end to the readings. Otherwise he would close the shop. She pleaded with him, and he gave way on the one condition that all scenes involving children be eliminated. Some five weeks later he was removed for "decaying liberalism unworthy of a Bolshevik." The first official act of the new chief was to abolish the readings and to transfer Zinaida Mironovna to the farm.

In a way, she did not mind. The transfer helped her solve her one big problem, *the* problem that plagued practically all the prisoners—how to obtain a few drops of fat to rub on her face before going to bed. All these women had an enemy they dreaded more than they feared the M.V.D.—age. All their dreams were directed toward the day of freedom and reunion with their beloved ones. And on that day of rejoicing, they knew, age might deprive them of the thing they cherished most, their husbands' love.

Most of the prisoners were in their middle and late thirties, or, like Zinaida Mironovna, in their early forties. They were trapped by their age, by the scorching heat, scarcity of water, and hard work, and yet they fought, fiercely and pathetically, to preserve whatever youth there was left in their faces. Most of the talk revolved around that. They exchanged whatever knowledge they had on the subject, pestered the doctors for advice, and eagerly questioned every newcomer in the hope of learning about new methods of fighting gray hair and wrinkles.

One day a newcomer said that the process of aging was slowed down by the simple expedient of sleeping on a high pillow. The doctors debunked the idea, but from that night on many of the women spent their restless nights, after twelve hours of grueling work, sleeping in an almost semiupright position, tucking everything they could under their pillows.

The one means of avoiding wrinkles they all knew, and the only one available to them all, was massaging their faces before going to bed. At night, when the sentries locked them in their barracks, they would listen to the sound of the women patting the wrinkles out of their faces. Not all of them could get fats for the purpose. Those who worked on the farm occasionally would steal a little piece of butter and spread it over their faces before it melted in the heat. Sometimes a glistening face betrayed them, resulting in punishment. The others would gather droplets of fats floating on top of their soup, and would then perform miracles of ingenuity in "burning it over" until the water evaporated, leaving enough fatty substance to massage the wrinkles around the eyes and on the forehead.

Probably no words written by man, except the Bible, meant so much to so many people as Konstantin Simonov's poem, *Wait for Me*, meant to the Russians. The opening lines were:

*Wait for me and I'll come back.  
Only wait and wait,  
Even if the yellow rain  
Is knocking at the gate.*

Originally intended for the Red Army men at the front and their wives and sweethearts in the rear, this sentimental lyric swept the entire Soviet Union like wildfire, becoming a symbol of steadfastness and devotion, a promise and a plan. Even though millions of copies were published, this poem was hard



to get, and multiplied the work of the none too efficient Soviet mail-carrying system, as letters with the words of *Wait for Me* began to pour from the front to the rear, from the rear to the front, from city to city and village to village. To no one was its message so intense, so passionate in its plea as to the women in Russia's concentration camps.

When the woman who had spent over three years with Zinaida Mironovna at her concentration camp called on Seryozha, the one message she had for him was a request to send a copy of the poem to his father, if he possibly could do it, saying that he sent it at her request.

Seryozha never did, for he was unable to learn anything at all about his father's fate, despite numerous letters addressed to the N.K.V.D., the Central Committee, and to Stalin himself.



## PART SIX

# The World of Soviet Arts



## Chapter 17

I made my first direct contact with the Soviet art world in the middle thirties through my friend, the painter Sergei Golovenko.

Regimentation of the arts, as we know it now, was only beginning then, and because of the interruption caused by the war it was slow in assuming the monstrous, all-embracing proportions it has reached today. The winds of discussion, criticism, and satire were blowing with a relative freedom impossible today under the Kremlin's deadly policing of the arts.

At the time I first became acquainted with Sergei and his wife, Tanya, he frequently held open house in his small one-room apartment. Especially memorable were the Thursday night gatherings. Their two children, whose insatiable curiosity about art found expression in licking tubefuls of paint, and who were therefore always spitting various colors, would be packed off to the spacious home of Sergei's father. When the guests gathered Sergei would place a huge old peasant straw hat on the table, and everyone would chip in. Tanya would then go to the store and return with black bread, sausage, and beer. On a special occasion, if someone in the crowd happened to have sold a painting that week, she would have enough money for vodka.

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Besides food and drink, there was singing, recitations of poetry and, above all, discussion. Seryozha usually dominated

the conversation. A little dark man with the wit and vivacity of a Frenchman, he wore his jacket, patched and stained and a size too small, with the elegance and independence of a duke. Despite his youth, his erudition in art and literature was enormous, but it never weighed on him or his listeners, as he discoursed on Proust, Stendhal, Cézanne, or Renoir. He would spend days on end at the Museum of Modern Western Art, one of the world's most valuable collections. When the museum was closed down about two years ago by Alexander Gerasimov, the tsar of the Soviet art world, the latter remarked:

"We must do it. The people may like that degenerate art, and the young growing painters may be contaminated by it."

The All-Union Society for Cultural Relations indulged during the war in an occasional exhibition of the art of various countries. Immediately after the war, in the fall of 1945, there was an exhibition of American art. Gerasimov made a speech at the official opening of the exhibition in which he expressed (with some reluctance) the idea that American painters have a certain amount of imagination and also reveal a good deal of thought. At this point he paused and Ilya Ehrenburg could be heard saying: "Naturally, they are not bothered by you and your kind."

Gerasimov was also responsible for removing Chagal's paintings from the Jewish display at the Jewish Theater in Moscow. These paintings were done by Marc Chagal for the theater in the twenties. The late Mikhoels, director of the theater until about a year ago, when he was murdered in Minsk under mysterious circumstances, was heartbroken when he received instructions to remove the Chagal paintings from public display as "representative of the bourgeois decaying art of the decaying West."

As if anticipating the future actions of Gerasimov, Seryozha used to speak heatedly at his parties, somewhat in this vein:



"The Impressionists and other great men of French art were men of genius growing out of traditions created by Europe's greatest painters. We cannot and must not by-pass them. We Russians never had really great painters, we never had great traditions, and learned very little from others. Our Repin had an enormous talent but he was like a poet born with a great gift who remained semiliterate all his life. Even if we do not agree with the Western masters we must know them, we must understand their contributions and only then go beyond them, as Tolstoy did in literature."

Time and again the discussion would inevitably come around to Alexander Gerasimov, the feared, hated, and despised "court" painter, the president of the soon to be established Academy of Arts and secretary-general of the Artists' Union. He is the archenemy of "formalism," that loose term which is now used as a sword to destroy original thinking and experimentation. The "purely Marxist" critics frequently use the term "formalism" to hide their own ignorance and fear.

With his porcine face, mean temper, and meager intellect, Gerasimov is probably still the most unassailable man active in the fields of Soviet art. But even he received a scolding recently when the Kremlin started a campaign to make regimented art an active weapon in the "cold war." A certain Victor Sazhin attacked Gerasimov this summer in a newspaper article, criticizing his latest painting, *Son's Home-coming*. The picture in question showed a young Russian soldier returning from war. Sazhin pointed out that the soldier didn't look as if he had ever smelled gunpowder or endured the trials and horrors of war. Criticism of this sort was certainly justified but it could have been made against Gerasimov any time in the last fifteen years.

Gerasimov has achieved his dominant position in the world of art by idealizing the Soviet leaders, particularly Stalin, depicting them as inspired men. He has endeared himself to

the high-placed Soviet bureaucrats and their wives by painting their children as wingless angels wearing clothes copied from ads in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

In addition to hating and despising Gerasimov for his reactionary role in art, the Soviet painters have it in for him for yet another reason. In one of Moscow's innumerable small winding streets, they ran a little night club with a variety show which was the last bohemian rendezvous in the Soviet capital. Located in a basement, its walls and ceiling were decorated with an imagination which would make Bemelmans look stilted. Only members of the Artists' Union and their guests were allowed.

Without knowing it, Sergei Golovenko invited me to what proved to be the last night of the artists' cabaret. The master of ceremonies was a talented young actress who parodied a Moscow Art Theater rendition of *Anna Karenina*. She introduced each part of the program while supposedly waiting for the train that was to end her life. After every act, each one devoted to a branch of art, she would make the sign of the cross, express horror at the low ebb of art in the U.S.S.R., wish her train would arrive at last, so she could make an end to it all—and, in the meantime, introduce the next act.

Rumors had been circulating for days, and everyone was waiting for the Gerasimov act. It was called *kontraktatsia*.

Stemming from the word "contract," *kontraktatsia* represents the economic basis of the Communist Party's effort to control, as well as develop, Soviet art. An artist displays his works before a commission appointed by the Union of Soviet Painters. The commission may select some of these canvases as worthy of being recommended to museums or salons, as the Russians call their art galleries, where the paintings are for sale to the public. But the main job of the commission is to determine whether the artist is worthy of being placed under *kontraktatsia*, that is, whether or not the Union of Soviet

Painters will undertake to pay the artist in the course of the coming year anywhere between six and twelve thousand rubles in monthly installments. In return the artist is to present to them the results of his year's work. The commission then evaluates it. It is under no obligation to accept anything, and the artist is obliged to return the money if his works are rejected. If the total sum exceeds the amount already received by the artist, he is paid the difference, and he is under an obligation to pay the difference if the total sum falls short of the sum with which he was financed. He may pay out of his next year's contract.

The selected works are recommended to museums all over the Soviet Union or are sold through salons to individuals and organizations. Among the customers are the "elite" of Soviet society: high Party officials, army generals, writers, actors, and scientists. Theaters and workers' clubs frequently buy paintings to decorate their foyers and reading rooms.

The Union of Soviet Painters, financed primarily by the Arts Committee of the Soviet cabinet, helps out its members by giving them loans, running rest homes in various parts of the Soviet Union, and helping them obtain the hard-to-get paints, canvases, and brushes.

A rich source of income to the artists is provided by the Kremlin's love for pageants. The annual observance of May 1, the November 7 celebrations of the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, and the summer Sports Parade, particularly the latter, are accompanied by a splash of colors of such lavishness that it seems all of Russia's artists have used up all the colors in the land to achieve the effect. The most elaborate and colorful celebration of all was occasioned by the eight hundredth birthday of Moscow in the fall of 1947. Work was so plentiful that practically all the artists of the Soviet capital paid up their debts and saved enough for several months' indulgence in "real art."

Still, an artist's security in the Soviet Union depends largely on *kontraktatsia*. This is where the Central Committee makes its current line felt most acutely. An artist's well-being and reputation stand or fall with the commission's decision, and the reasons advanced for accepting or rejecting a man's work. The word "formalism" assumes its fiercest aspects right here, as it is bandied about to brand everything a member of the commission happens to dislike. Since it has never been strictly defined in the Soviet Union, it is applied indiscriminately to Impressionism, Surrealism, and every other ism of the "decadent West." It is often used as a synonym for the deadliest of all sins in Russia today: "kowtowing to degenerate Western bourgeois art."

It was this cancerous growth on the healthy system of *kontraktatsia* that the take-off on the crowded stage of the artists' cabaret attacked that night. An emaciated artist wearing picturesquely tattered clothes was arranging his paintings on the stage. The central piece, a large canvas, represented in the left corner an industrial scene, gradually blending on the right with an idyllic nature scene, depicting a beautiful peasant girl dreamily plucking a flower as if saying: "He loves me, he loves me not." A three-man commission came in wearing masks, headed by a short stocky person with curly hair, the face hidden behind the mask of a pig. The instant and deafening applause revealed that everyone recognized Gerasimov. The pig face gravely inspected the central painting and pronounced his judgment: "The left side of the painting, inspired by the might of the Stalinist five-year plans is accepted. The right side is rejected as ideologically unsound."

No wonder the Russians got a great kick out of the crack about Picasso which came to them via *Time Magazine*, the crack about two Russians discussing the report that Picasso joined the Communist Party. Whereupon one of the Russians exclaimed: "But it is impossible. Picasso is too revolutionary for that!"

We who laughed ourselves sick at the satire did not suspect how soon the Soviet art would start shaking under the shattering blows of the Alexander Gerasimovs. The savage *Pravda* attack on Shostakovich, which came a couple of months later, marked the beginning of the regimentation which has only now reached its height. But to me the beginning came the day after the *kontraktatsia* act. On that day the artists' cabaret was closed on the insistence of the enraged Gerasimov.

Even the frequent outbursts against Gerasimov could not keep Sergei and his guests from the subject of poetry. Painters everywhere feel a kinship between their art and poetry, but this tendency is probably more outspoken in Russia than anywhere else. At least that was true of Seryozha's guests. There were always several poets among them, and the recital of their own verses was inescapable. But even they could not rival the artists in their ability to recite the classics by heart for hours on end, nor could they match the vision, wit, and passion with which the painters discussed such poets as Byron, Poe, Whitman, Pushkin, or Mayakovsky.

Every now and then word would get around that next Thursday's party was to be devoted to the reading, let us say, of Pushkin's "little" tragedy, *The Stone Guest*. Whoever could, brought a copy of Pushkin, roles would be distributed on the spot, Seryozha invariably managing in his own inoffensive way to secure for himself the most interesting part, and the recitation would begin. Other favorites were Sukhovo-Kobylin's immortal trilogy: *The Case*, *Krechinsky's Marriage*, and *Tarelkin's Death*, plays of immense power and comedy, yet to be discovered by America's Theatre Guild.

The occasional appearance at these parties of Vladimir Yakhontov was the cause of rejoicing and awe. Yakhontov was Russia's greatest representative of an art that is practically non-existent in the United States, the art of recital. To this day there are at least half a dozen men and women in Russia,

any one of whom can pack a hall seating two to three thousand people to listen to a recitation of the works of Pushkin, Mayakovsky, Mark Twain, De Maupassant, or Chekhov. They use no make-up, no costumes, no scenery. There is only the man and his voice, the author and his immortal prose or poetry.

To the very day of his death Yakhontov was the uncrowned king of recitalists, a complicated, silent, unhappy man with light hair, bleary green eyes, and a magnificent voice. He recited the way some men drink, with abandon and complete absorption, as if hoping to drown everything in the overpowering music and sweep of the heartbreakingly beautiful and complicated Russian language.

His recitations of the works of Mayakovsky, the great, turbulent, raucous poet of the Russian Revolution, were the recitals most popular and most frequently given in Moscow's concert halls. But whenever I asked Yakhontov to recite something to me in his small, book-clogged room a few blocks away from the Kremlin or when he was urged at Sergei's parties, he would abandon Mayakovsky for the haunting lines of Alexander Blok:

*And every evening at the appointed hour  
(Or is it but a dream I dream again?)  
The figure of a girl in shining silks  
Is seen to move across the foggy pane.*

*She slowly picks her way among the drunks,  
And always unaccompanied, all alone,  
Breathing of fragrance of mist, she comes  
To sit beside the window, the unknown.*

.....

*By her strange nearness held as by a spell,  
I peer behind her somber veil and see*

*The fairy gleam of an enchanted shore,  
And an enchanted vista beckons me.<sup>1</sup>*

Or the sonorous laments of Yessenin over the breaking up of his idyllic village world under the impact of Russia's industrialization:

*Have you seen how over the steppe,  
Hiding in fog and rain,  
Breathing through iron nostrils,  
Runs on its paws the train?  
After him, as in a race despairingly bold,  
Gallops furiously a red-maned colt.  
My dear, oh my dear, funny fool!  
What good is his noble chivalry?  
Doesn't he know that the living horse  
Is beaten by the iron cavalry?*

Or lines by Russia's most complex contemporary poet, Boris Pasternak, whose intricate imagery and unsurpassed mastery have placed him alongside T. S. Eliot as the greatest "poets' poet" of our century.

Accused by Soviet literary critics of being Western and decadent, Pasternak has diverted his enormous talent to the monumental task of translating the complete works of Shakespeare, and has ceased to write verse. At least he has ceased to publish it.

A similar fate has befallen Sergei Golovenko. Expelled some eighteen months ago from the Union of Soviet Painters for sinful "formalism," he now has all the time in the world to draw according to his heart's desire. This makes him of very little assistance to his wife in supporting their two children. To

<sup>1</sup>From *The Stranger*, by Alexander Blok; translated by Babette Deutsch. From *A Treasury of Russian Verse*, edited by A. Yarmolinsky; copyright, 1949, by The Macmillan Company; used with permission of the publishers and of Babette Deutsch.

make ends meet, she writes copy for the house organ of the Ministry of the Textile Industry.

As for Vladimir Yakhontov—one day in 1944, like Yesenin and Mayakovsky before him, he committed suicide. He left a note saying: "Farewell, I am flying into the stratosphere."



## Chapter 18

The state of Soviet literature is as sorrowful as the state of art, the theater, or the cinema. And it is so despite the fact that the Soviet reading public is probably the largest in the world, and certainly the most eager.

While one is exposing the Bolsheviks for relentlessly disturbing and crippling literary tastes, one must also give them credit for converting old backward, almost illiterate Russia into a nation of avid readers. When the Bolsheviks came to power less than one third of the population could read and write. I recall a poster, one of the first to appear after the Revolution of 1917, which showed a little boy struggling with his homework and saying: "Oh, Mother, I wish you could read and write. I need your help so much." Between 1919 and 1922, five million adults fulfilled the boy's wish. In 1926 there were twice as many literates in Russia as in 1897, but even then the percentage of literates among army recruits and marrying couples was 87.7 among men and 46.2 per cent among women. In 1939, 81.2 per cent of all persons in the Soviet Union were literate. The percentage is even higher now.

The number of libraries reached in 1939 a record of 77,590, including 61,700 in rural communities.

The above figures bear witness to a veritable cultural revolution. It has created an insatiable market for books. Their number has been growing in arithmetical progression, the

demand in geometrical. To satisfy that demand, to push along and control the knowledge, tastes, and thinking of the Soviet peoples, the government has created a vast network of publishing houses, the running of which is a managerial nightmare, owing to shortages of metal for type, printing equipment, paper, and skilled labor. It is also a job pregnant with danger, since a mistake in the selection of a book, the timing of its publication, or the size of the edition might lead to grave consequences. I know of at least half a dozen heads of Soviet publishing houses who have been purged for just such "mistakes."

In line with Stalin's dictum that "the printed word is the sharpest and most powerful weapon of the Communist Party," the Party keeps Soviet publishing under the strictest control. The Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, headed by Suslov, who was held responsible directly to the late Politburo member, Andrei Zhdanov, has set up an organization which censors everything intended for publication. Commonly known as Glavlit, its full name is the Central Administration on Literary and Publishing Matters. The Propaganda Department appoints the director and editor in chief of each publishing house, holding them responsible for the fulfillment of the plan by their respective houses, and, above all, for the ideology expressed in the books they are putting out.

When S. A. Lozovsky, director of the leading Soviet publishing house of fiction and poetry, the Gosizdat, was appointed Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, in charge of the Far Eastern Division, he found the treacherous Japanese and the devious Chinese easier to handle than Glavlit. Even the indomitable foreign correspondents, with whom he exchanged witty, sarcastic, and downright angry remarks during his famous wartime press conferences, were to him just naughty boys compared to the Glavlit doctrinaires.

Like the director and editor in chief, Glavlit censors are held responsible for ideological deviations, inconsistencies, and praise of the West, no matter how timid and indirect. Their major weapon of self-protection is procrastination. This is a weapon they share with all Soviet bureaucrats. Bred by fear, procrastination is the scourge of every endeavor in the Soviet Union, be it industry, agriculture, or science. During a long trip to the front just before the end of the war I complained to a Foreign Office censor. I was annoyed at the slowness with which the Press Department reacted to our requests, no matter how reasonable and modest.

In a moment of fatigue and frankness he said to me: "Why don't you leave us alone? Don't you realize that we cannot decide? Fearing to make a mistake, we send your request to someone higher up. He has to confer with Vishinsky or sometimes even with Molotov. And they are busy men."

A manuscript is delayed by the publishing house reader, until he worries out a report, usually so full of "buts" and "howevers" that it is handed over to a more experienced man, preferably a Communist Party member. He, too, prefers not to shoulder responsibility, and the manuscript finally lands in the laps of the editor in chief and the director, both of whom must be Party members. After the book is accepted and set up, proofs are pulled, corrected, and sent to Glavlit. Each copy of every book must have in the back the word "Glavlit," followed by a number, the number of the permit. That number represents a man, who has signed the permit. The signature is hard to get, hard to give. It spells responsibility. It therefore spells procrastination. In the meantime the manager of the printing plant, who has production deadlines of his own, does not let the director of the publishing house rest. The latter is frantic and helpless. He pleads with the Glavlit for speed and with the printing-house manager for time. But there is a shortage of metal, and the manager has the authority to seize the type

and melt it down to meet the constant rush of other orders. On most occasions, as soon as a book comes off the press, the plates are melted.

This everlasting three-way tug of war is one of the reasons for the Soviet indulgence in the publication of universally recognized classics of world and Russian literature. Most of them, fortunately, live up even to the unstable Soviet definitions of progressivism, culture, and democracy, especially since long-winded introductions, footnotes, and postscripts take care of the ideological "mistakes" a Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac, or Tolstoy might have committed from the point of view of the current curve in the Party line.

In addition to the titans of world literature, the current Kremlin favorites are also a godsend to Soviet publishers. The moment an author is praised by *Pravda* and *Culture and Life*, both organs of the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party, or by the *Literary Gazette*, organ of the Writers' Union, which of late has become militant and authoritative on Stalin's personal instructions, then all procrastination in connection with his books ends. They begin to appear in record time by the hundreds of thousands of copies. The same results are achieved if an author gets the Stalin Prize or—the secret dream of every Soviet writer—a congratulatory telephone call from Stalin himself.

Josef Stalin has always kept an eagle eye on literature, finding time not only to read the major works of Soviet men of letters, but also to receive groups of authors for lengthy discussions and to get in touch with individuals, often by telephone in the middle of the night, to congratulate them on a new book or to give encouragement and detailed advice. Among the recipients of such telephone calls are the novelist and publicist, Ilya Ehrenburg; the writer of fiction and playwright, Leonid Leonov, and Vadim Kozhevnikov, author of the finest long short story of the war, "March-April," written

in the Jack London manner. These calls are not without their humor and pathos. Trying to reach a woman writer, Antonovskaya, to congratulate her on the manuscript of her historical novel about Georgia, Stalin's birthplace, he got her out of bed in the middle of the night. Now the telephone was not in her room, but in the hall of the apartment which she shared with several other families in the usual Moscow tradition. The ringing of the phone woke up some of the other people in the apartment, who could not fall asleep again since the conversation was long and the voice of the excited authoress was high-pitched. Stalin was trying to give her pointers on the history of Georgia, and she tried to make hay while the sun shone by voicing complaints against the bureaucrats in the Glavlit and the publishing house who were sabotaging her book. Doors began to open and angry voices of sleepy men and women began to clamor for silence. "But this is Stalin!" she shouted at them exultantly, without taking the necessary precautions. When Stalin inquired about the noise and the sudden exclamation, she explained the reason. Next day a telephone was installed in her room. There have been no more calls from the Kremlin, but her book soon went into mass production and was highly praised by all reviewers.

Stalin's tastes are to a large degree responsible for the present pitiful state of affairs in all fields of Soviet art, particularly in literature. His tastes are a savage combination of Soviet purposefulness and patriotism and mid-Victorian respectability. Adultery, unmarried motherhood, drunkenness, or any form of immorality is branded as bourgeois vulgarity unworthy of the Soviet man.

One of Stalin's *bons mots* in connection with literature, proving that even a mid-Victorian approach has its strong points, deals with a volume of lyrics Simonov wrote for his girl friend and future wife, the actress Valentina Serova. When the volume reached Stalin and he read the verses con-

taining more food for gossip than for poetic imagination, he is reported to have said: "This volume should have come out in two copies only: one for him, one for her."

Many an author of a successful book and many a movie director has been on edge hoping to get a call from Stalin. One day the Georgian actor Gelovani, whose talents are devoted almost exclusively to the portraying of Stalin on the stage and screen, received a hint that Stalin would like to get in touch with him. The poor man stuck to his apartment for weeks, not daring to leave it for fear of being out when the call came through. Some evil tongues insisted that Gelovani grew whiskers because he would not come out long enough even to visit a barbershop.

Under the present setup, even Kremlin favor is no guarantee to a publisher. The favorites may lapse from grace. Also a new book by a man who has continued in favor may be found muddleheaded and ideologically harmful by some Central Committee or Politburo member after the head of a publishing concern has accepted the book, the Glavlit has okayed it, papers have printed enthusiastic reviews by leading literary critics, and it has become a best seller. The damage is aggravated by the fact that, because of a shortage of plays and original scenarios, a successful novel is usually adapted for the stage, and a film based on the book is made, frequently before its ideological sins are discovered. Then hell breaks loose.

The most celebrated recent cases involve two men who in the field of literature occupy roughly the same place as Stalin and Molotov in the country as a whole. They are Alexander Fadeyev, general secretary of the Writers' Union, and Konstantin Simonov, his right-hand man in the Union, and editor in chief of a leading Soviet literary magazine, *New World*.

Fadeyev's novel *Young Guard* was universally acclaimed in the U.S.S.R. as the best Russian novel on the war, which I

think it is. But after a million copies of the novel had been sold, and millions of people had seen stage versions of it, and work on a film based on it was practically finished, instructions came, possibly from Stalin himself. Following the instructions, the critics began to assail Fadeyev for depicting the Red Army retreat in a section of the Donbas, and the evacuation of civilians, plants, and cattle, as a stampede born of disorganization and sheer panic. This scene, by the way, belongs among the best passages in all Soviet literature. Fadeyev was also criticized for depicting the young Kom-somols' struggle against the Germans as a product of the unguided patriotism of young boys and girls, rather than as part of a well-planned and skillfully directed resistance scheme by the Communist Party.

Criticism, no matter how biting, is a healthy and necessary companion to creative writing. But in the Soviet Union, where the Party line dominates everything, criticism is savage, harmful, and is frequently a precursor to administrative action. Fortunately for Fadeyev, his novel as a whole was not condemned. Believing that God helps him who helps himself, Fadeyev publicly admitted his mistakes and announced that he would rewrite *Young Guard* in the light of the purely political criticism leveled at him.

Simonov was assailed for his novel, *Smoke of the Homeland*, describing the state of mind of a Soviet engineer who fought in the war and later traveled extensively in Europe and the United States on various missions. Critics had praised the book, but after secret Central Committee instructions they branded the novel as a sloppy, hastily cooked-up job, incidentally confirming my conception of Simonov as a literary businessman who is quick to earn a few extra ounces of favor with the Kremlin and a lot of rubles by being the first to reflect in his writings the latest curve in the Party line. The critics also attacked Simonov for his faulty interpretation of

the Kremlin's conception of the ideal Soviet patriot. His hero, they said, is too contemplative, too little the man of action that a zealous Soviet patriot should be.

Like Fadeyev, Simonov escaped disgrace, probably because, passing severe judgment on the United States, his hero makes "some perfectly sound remarks about capitalist civilization."

But while the novelists emerged practically unscathed from the storm their fiction caused, the literary critics who had praised the novels are still spinning helplessly in the vortex.

Probably the sorriest lot among Soviet men of letters is that of the literary critics. Charged with the task of evaluating and interpreting creative writings, they are not permitted to use their own judgment, but are expected to be guided by a "sense of responsibility to their people, state, and party," to cite Andrei Zhdanov, the late dictator in the field of creative effort. Taking the line of least resistance, they praise the works of the favorites of the Kremlin and are elaborately evasive about novels or plays they are not sure of. They perform miracles of literary acrobatics by praising doubtfully and condemning flatteringly, but they swoop down like vultures on a poor author whose sins seem to them obvious.

The organ of the Central Committee, *Culture and Life*, was created for the express purpose of unearthing ideological mistakes. The editors are going about their job with such zeal that very few Soviet writers, journalists, editors, producers, painters, and composers have any hope of escaping punishment. In helpless rage they have dubbed *Culture and Life* the Common Grave.

Their antics, born of fear, are so repulsive to watch that one or the other organ of the Central Committee raps them from time to time. Thus *Pravda* took them to task for always praising Simonov because they think it safe to praise anyone who is accepted as he has been. And even *Culture and Life* spat



fire on critics who "swing a club instead of exercising the art of criticism," when analyzing works of fiction they happen to suspect of being ideologically unsound.

One of the most daring of Soviet authors today, Vera Panova, came out early this year with a novel, *Kruzhilikha* (the name of a place in the Urals), the first important work portraying life in a postwar Soviet industrial community. It is a starkly realistic book distinguished by the author's keen power of observation and intense integrity. None of Gerasimov's pink cheeks for Panova. A lively controversy about the book was started by the *Literary Gazette*, with all but two critics assaulting the author for her "uncritical objectivity." Summing up the debate, the editors, too, condemned her. But the Stalin Prize Committee, in the most unexpected action in all the years of its existence, fooled them all by awarding Panova a Stalin Prize for *Kruzhilikha*, a novel of stark realism in which men and women live, love, work, and suffer as unattractively as they all too frequently do in the Soviet Union.

But what are the poor critics to do if the Kremlin hypocritically demands of them daring, independence of judgment, and original thinking, and simultaneously places them in a strait-jacket by insisting on a militant emphasis on the political and ideological aspects of literature, and a no less militant beligerency toward the influences of the bourgeois West?

The Russians have a word for the Kremlin line—*partyinost*, stemming from the word "Party," which demands that all problems be viewed through the prism of Communist philosophy and practice as currently interpreted by the Politburo. Never in the history of the Soviet Union and its Communist Party has *partyinost* been voiced so urgently and irrevocably as today. And the stress on it grows in intensity along with the mounting fierceness of the cold war.

The crystallization of the *partyinost* stage in Soviet thought has caused the problem of Dostoyevsky to raise its sphinx-like

head once more. A challenging problem to literary criticism the world over, Dostoyevsky has been a veritable nightmare to Soviet critics. His immense, self-contradictory, and provocative contribution to Russian thought and literature causes a wave of controversy every now and then, invariably following the entrenchment of a new period in the zigzag evolution of Soviet thought. Such a period has asserted itself with a vengeance right now, and it was touched off by the publication early in the year of three new books on Dostoyevsky. Two of them, *The Young Dostoyevsky* and *F. M. Dostoyevsky*, are by Vladimir Kirpotin, a veteran Soviet critic who has miraculously survived many a storm. The third, *In Dostoyevsky's Creative Laboratory*, is by A. Dolinin. The books have all the earmarks of having been written and printed before the recent intensification of *partyinost*.

What interested me was not the drubbing the two critics received but the application of *partyinost* to Dostoyevsky. Writing in the *Literary Gazette*, of which he is editor in chief, Vladimir Yermilov stated the case bluntly:

Contemporary bourgeois literature is mobilizing all its forces to stain and cover with mud all things human, to prove the weakness, insignificance, and contemptuousness of human nature. The very essence of man is filthy and despicable—this is the foul thesis bandied about by the literary agents of world reaction. They depict mankind as a cruel and vulgar mass of slovens, each and every one of whom nurses within himself an evil spider, a criminal, a murderer. Mankind must be bridled. Therein lies the significance of the frenzied slander on man, comprising the major content of current literature abroad.

This literature seeks to corrupt the souls of men, to crush their will to fight, and to justify the insane violations to which the rulers of the bourgeois world are subjecting people. A bitter, irreconcilable *struggle for man* is raging between progressive and reactionary literature. The progressive camp is led by our Soviet literature.

What role does Dostoyevsky's creative work play in this struggle? To whose camp does he belong?

Our criticism must give a clear, unequivocal answer to these questions. Just as during his lifetime, also now Dostoyevsky stands in the vanguard of reaction. His works are being exploited widely and universally in the frenzied *campaign against man* undertaken by Wall Street's literary lackeys. And it is natural that this should be so, because Dostoyevsky wasted the entire force of his talent on proving the weakness, insignificance, and vulgarity of human nature.

Even sterner were the accusations hurled at the immortal author by David Zaslavsky, who said that, having been condemned to hard labor for a fleeting participation in the activity of a revolutionary circle, Dostoyevsky returned from Siberia "with a passionate enmity toward materialism, democracy, and socialism." Like a prosecuting attorney, Zaslavsky pointed an accusing finger at Dostoyevsky: "As an artist and publicist, Dostoyevsky served the rightist camp, growing ever closer to extreme monarchists. His direct task was to envenom Russia's youth with ideological poison." And then the knock-out blow: "Dostoyevsky is the father of double-dealing treachery."

Of course Zaslavsky, the hatchet man of Soviet journalism and criticism, swung his ax also in the direction of the authors of the above-mentioned three books on Dostoyevsky. In his article titled "Down with the Idealization of Dostoyevsky's Reactionary Views," he charged the two men with "not only failing to unmask the bourgeois confusion in the evaluation of Dostoyevsky, but also with giving that confusion further succor. Moreover, the authors also distorted the artistic and ideological image of Dostoyevsky in an attempt to dye him into a 'Socialist.'"

Zaslavsky noted with ominous surprise the suggestion by one of the two critics that Dostoyevsky, had he lived at the time of the abortive Revolution of 1905, would have sided with Russia's working class, and the assertion of the other that Dostoyevsky, the incomparable writer and visionary, had a

premonition of the great socialist Revolution of 1917, and that "his dream of Russia's universal mission of emancipation and enlightenment has come true."

Zaslavsky, as well as Yermilov, following the present official line, agreed with Dostoyevsky's prophecy of a great future for the Russian people, a prophecy that reserved for them the first place among the nations of the world. But here the agreement between the Kremlin spokesmen and Dostoyevsky ends. The latter, wrote Zaslavsky, saw the great mission of the Soviet people "in exercising its Christian virtues to save the world from the victory of socialism—a victory which he, a frightened, conservative publicist, viewed as a universal catastrophe and the end of civilization."

Still the Kremlin has not completely rejected Dostoyevsky. As a matter of fact he is frequently spoken of even today in Russia as a genius, some of whose works belong to the golden treasury of world literature. Among them are *Poor People*, *House of the Dead*, *White Nights*, and *Crime and Punishment*. *The Possessed*, distinguished in Zaslavsky's eyes "only by its vulgarity and cheap slander of the Revolution," is saved from complete damnation by containing passages that "describe superbly Russian life of the pre-Revolutionary period." The indefatigable Zaslavsky pointed out for the guidance of Soviet literary criticism what remains acceptable in Dostoyevsky: "With genuine satiric poison he depicted the ways of the capitalist bourgeoisie and bureaucracy. He knew how to arouse the sympathies of the readers with the humiliation and pain of little people crushed by capitalism."

The humiliating subservience with which the critics have mechanically adopted the clichés and slogans of political propaganda gave me the idea of writing a parody on Soviet literary criticism today. The occasion presented itself when the seven-year-old son of a friend of mine, a high-ranking American diplomat, recited to me a poem he had written.

Here is the poem by the child, whom we shall call John Chamberlain Bull, followed by excerpts from an imaginary Soviet essay on the poem and its author:

THE MONKEY WRENCH  
*by John Chamberlain Bull*

*I speak in German,  
I speak in French,  
But to tell you the truth  
I'm just a monkey wrench.*

*All I have for lunch  
Is a bottle of punch,  
But to tell you the truth  
I'm just a monkey wrench.*

*I live in China,  
My cat's named Dinah,  
But to tell you the truth  
I'm just a monkey wrench.*

*I sleep at night  
If the moon is bright,  
But to tell you the truth  
I'm just a monkey wrench.*

*I ate some flour  
But it tasted sour,  
And to tell you the truth  
I'm just a monkey wrench.*

THE SPIRITUAL TRAGEDY OF JOHN CHAMBERLAIN  
BULL, AUTHOR OF *THE MONKEY WRENCH*

(*Excerpts from a six-column editorial in Literary Culture and Life*)

The American poet, John Chamberlain Bull, is a typical product of his age—the age of the decline of monopolistic capital in the

United States, that last obstacle in humanity's march toward its crowning achievement: World Communism.

As a drop of water reflects the entire sun, so does Bull's poem, *The Monkey Wrench*, reflect the psychology and the creative tendencies of the poet.

It is the psychology of the imperialist. Influenced by the Marshall Plan seeking to catch in its net suffering postwar humanity, the poet roams the world. "I speak in German, I speak in French," he says significantly, and "I live in China."

His is the psychology of a reactionary race hater. He has been insolent enough to rhyme his cat Dinah with China, thus hinting that the free, democratic, liberated regions of China are akin to the treacherous lowly cat.

The eminent Soviet critic, Vladimir Yermilov, has recently written with penetrating dialectical materialism:

"A bitter, irreconcilable struggle for the souls of men is ranging between the camps of progressive and reactionary literature."

What role does John Chamberlain Bull's creative work play in this struggle? To whose camp does he belong?

He belongs to the camp doomed by the evolution of social forces, the reactionary camp led by predatory U. S. imperialism. One must admit that the poem, *The Monkey Wrench*, reveals talent and maturity, but it is the maturity of overripe American capitalism ready to fall from the tree of history and decay in the quagmire of time.

Yes, there is no future for the forceful but mutilated genius of the American poet. He is immoral and addicted to drink. He himself has confessed:

*All I have for lunch  
Is a bottle of punch.*

His nights are tortured and sleepless:

*I sleep at night  
If the moon is bright.*

But as everyone well knows, the moon is *never* bright in the dismal world of capitalism on its downgrade.

Even flour, the fruit of man's noble toil on Mother Earth, turns sour in his degenerate bourgeois stomach, as Bull himself admits in frightened though sonorous lines.

But this physical disintegration is sheer joy compared to the spiritual purgatory in which this representative American lives.

His spiritual world is full of all the unspeakable horrors that ever harassed his intellectual predecessor, the Russian writer Dostoyevsky. The words Comrade Yermilov said about Dostoyevsky, in accordance with Marxism-Leninism, fully apply to Bull's poetry:

"He wasted the entire power of his enormous talent to prove the weakness, insignificance, and vulgarity of human nature."

But, being a Russian, Dostoyevsky had a soul. The American poet, however, possesses not even a soul. All he has is a monkey wrench, that vulgar symbol of America's mechanistic civilization.

Another creative genius, Charlie Chaplin, who, like Dostoyevsky, has influenced Bull's intellect and *Weltanschauung*, gave eloquent expression to the horror of America's soulless machine age in his film *Modern Times*. But Chaplin escaped the deadly embrace of the American monkey wrench. John Chamberlain Bull does not seek to escape it. By declaring proudly, "I am just a monkey wrench," he identifies himself with it, he is dissolved in it, he is part of it.

Even Dostoyevsky, of whom a Soviet critic said with delicate subtlety that he was the father of double-dealing treachery, never hit the bottom of such a dismal abyss.

In conclusion the editorial said:

Our great leader, the inspirer of poets, the sun of the universe, our wise teacher Stalin, said that writers and poets are "engineers of human souls." But John Chamberlain Bull, the prophet of the Monkey Wrench, is no such engineer. All he can do is jerk the monkey wrench to the accompaniment of jazz, that raucous expression of a dying civilization.

Let us leave John Chamberlain Bull to his degenerate, decaying formalistic art and join the free, joyous masses celebrating the Stalinist Constitution at the Park of Culture and Rest.

In his policy-making speeches on the arts, the late Andrei Zhdanov held before the creative men of the Soviet Union visions of greatness which they are to share with the rest of their country, which is building a new civilization and establishing new relationships among men.

"If feudalism and, later on, the bourgeoisie in the periods of their flourishings could create art and literature asserting the new systems and praising the flourishing of these systems," he said, "then surely our new socialist system, embodying all the best in the history of human civilization and culture, is capable of creating the most advanced literature, which will leave far behind the best creations of olden times."

But a wish alone is not sufficient. Nor can ukases to the effect that great works of art must be written accomplish that sublime aim. What is needed is freedom, the "right to err" without fear of reprisal. Also necessary is unhampered intercourse with creative minds the world over, despite the possibility that these minds may leave their imprint. But the Bolshevik God is a jealous God, and a God of vengeance. For fully two years before his death in the summer of 1948, Zhdanov headed a campaign of policing the arts in Russia which made use of every possible weapon—criticism, direct and indirect economic pressure, and in extreme cases the purge.

Even during his very brief visit in Moscow some two years ago, Yehudi Menuhin could not but sense the damage done to the men and women of the Soviet art world by the lack of contact with the creative artists of the rest of the world. At a farewell banquet given in his honor, at which no foreigners were present, and to which Nila and I were most reluctantly invited (on Yehudi's vehement insistence), Menuhin urged them to stop stewing in their own juice and maintain permanent and close links with creative artists and artistic currents the world over. The Soviet artists listened in wistful and eloquent silence.

In addition to overwhelming Soviet audiences with the magic of his art, Menuhin provided the Muscovites with cause for much merriment, with his attempt to visit the Kremlin. Snatching a free hour one morning, Menuhin decided to see what the Kremlin was like. His hotel, the National, was just



across the square. Without saying anything to the Intourist office at the hotel, Menuhin walked up Red Square, stopped in front of the gates where two soldiers stand guard day and night, and started to walk through the gate. Before he knew what was happening, he was surrounded by soldiers and plainclothesmen who seemed to appear from nowhere. They asked for his pass. "I don't need a pass," said Yehudi. "All I want is to see the grounds and the buildings of the Kremlin, and then go back." The Russians could not believe their ears. Or was it that they misunderstood the impossible accent and the just as impossible grammar of the strange foreigner with a bewitching smile?

"Your passport?"

One of the Russians recognized the name of Menuhin, whose concerts were reported enthusiastically in the Soviet press, and told him gently but firmly that he must have a pass.

It was the very simplicity, the sublime naïveté of the incident that made the Muscovites roar with laughter, as the story made its wildfire rounds. "Imagine anyone trying to get into the Kremlin without a pass. . . ."

The Kremlin itself has confessed to the failure of breakdown communications campaign. Hardly a speech, article, or official pronouncement comes out without lamentations on the state of arts in the Soviet Union. Even if one uses exclusively the Soviet press as a criterion, one must arrive at the conclusion that Soviet plays performed by the country's great theaters are mediocre; the novels printed are inferior; art exhibitions are unworthy of criticism; literary criticism is inept and cowardly.

But what could Zhdanov and Company expect? How can artists soar to heights of inspiration when they are placed in strait jackets of fear?

Soviets artists must not:

Create "non-political" works;

Show appreciation of anything foreign.

Criticize the Party line or the leaders in the remotest way;

Be purely lyrical or pessimistic.

On the other hand, Soviet artists must:

Rebuff "the hideous slanders and attacks against our Soviet culture" and expose and attack bourgeois culture (Zhdanov);

"Stress the ideological and human superiority of our people brought up by our socialist regime" (Simonov);

Participate dynamically in the achievement of the current objective of the Soviet Union, be it the Five-Year Plan, reconstruction, or a hate-America campaign.

The beginning of the current Party line in the arts is usually associated with Zhdanov's pronouncement in September 1946, condemning the Leningrad literary magazines, *Zvezda* and *Leninград*, for their non-political outlook, and the subsequent expulsion of humorist Mikhail Zoshchenko and poetess Anna Akhmatova from the Union of Soviet Writers.

But the actual beginning probably goes still further back, to the day, late in 1945 or early 1946, when Stalin summoned the leading writers to the Kremlin and talked to them for hours. That was Stalin's first postwar conference with writers, and all Moscow was excited by reports about it. Details were contradictory, depending on whether you got the story from your secretary and chauffeur, from a writer you happened to talk to at an official reception, or from a friend active in the art world. Here is a synthetic picture, with details obtained from various sources, all of which agreed on the main points.

One day about a hundred authors received invitations to the Kremlin. The literati, very much excited, donned their best clothes and gathered in a small hall, wondering who was going to talk to them, and about what. Stalin appeared unheralded, cut short what was going to be a tumultuous and lengthy ovation, and launched a tirade on the shortcomings of the Soviet literary output. In his talk he revealed an excellent

firsthand knowledge of the activity of most of the men gathered there, giving an annihilating résumé of their works. His main thesis was that the literary output in the Soviet Union did not begin to compare with the epic quality of the titanic wartime effort of the workers and peasants, and the legendary exploits of the soldiers and officers, and that they were slow in turning to a portrayal of postwar life and problems.

He accused the writers of lack of patriotism, of seeking luxuries, of permitting themselves to be swayed by foreign influences to the extent of being proud of wearing foreign-made clothes.

One report had it that immediately following Stalin's speech one of the writers presented a resolution appealing to the group to abandon kowtowing before *zagranița*. All raised their hands in favor, revealing the possessors of these hands to be dressed to a man in foreign-made clothes.

Stalin also reproached the writers for greed, mentioning their passion for "fountains." Everybody roared with laughter, for they knew he referred to the late Alexi Tolstoy, who "liberated" a palace in Bessarabia of a well-stocked wine cellar and a fountain ensemble, and brought it all, complete with statues, to his summer place in a Moscow suburb. Tolstoy, by the way, was of the Count Tolstoy family, and behaved like a tsarist Russian aristocrat. His butler was once reported to have said to callers: "Sorry, His Highness has just departed for a Communist Party meeting."

Responding to Stalin's invitation to discuss the state of affairs in Soviet literature, some writers offered the excuse that their creative energies had been drained by the war. Others suggested that the war was still with them, and they could not turn quickly enough to new themes. They flattered Stalin by saying that glorious Soviet reality was always ahead of them. And no one dared to blame regimentation and controls.

## Chapter 19

The Soviet people have created outstanding works of art despite regimentation and controls, but they are few and far between. Russian composers account for most of these works, chiefly because music is so much more difficult to understand, interpret, and tamper with than, let us say, painting or literature, particularly for the literal-minded men in the Kremlin.

Official Soviet spokesmen and their professional defenders in the United States never fail to boast proudly of the financial security musicians enjoy in the U.S.S.R., and the widespread musical activity in the country. There are twenty-two conservatories in Russia, and every self-respecting city has a symphony orchestra and a theater of the opera and ballet. There are innumerable children's music schools and countless concert halls. The radio devotes more time to good music than any other radio in the world.

The Composers' Union in Moscow built a huge apartment house for composers and their families, a real achievement in the overcrowded capital. At the Home for Rest and Creative Work near Ivanovo in the Moscow Province, pleasant cottages stand far apart amid pines, each equipped with a piano. Men of the stature of Shostakovich and Khachaturian may have an additional cottage for complete privacy, furnished with just a piano and a sofa, tucked away in the woods.

All this is true, as are the statistics about Russia's success-

ful battle against illiteracy and the printing and distribution of the world's classics of literature. In music as in letters there have been tremendous achievements in width, so to speak, but not in depth. The incessant political interference and surveillance, the constant critical prodding, the direct or implied threat of loss of income, keep undermining the creative effort of the great Soviet composers.

Zhdanov's speech heralding a music conference called by the Central Committee in January 1948 castigated the works of Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, and others. Immediately after that speech the works of these composers were omitted from most concert programs. I do not mean to say that all their works will disappear for all time from all programs. Times change, the Party line changes, and with them the programs, but the composers, in the meantime, had been given a warning via their stomachs. To cite an extreme case, I know of a manager of a cinema in a small town near Moscow who was fired because soon after the current music purge started he permitted the orchestra to play a piece by Prokofiev.

To be sure, much in Zhdanov's criticism of the state of music in Russia is justifiable and pertinent. However, the Soviet insistence that composers must accept all of the criticism and must meekly admit their "sins" in humiliating public appearances exposes the hypocrisy as well as the steel lining of the Kremlin's much-publicized interest in the development and growth of Soviet music. The Kremlin is really interested in music, cinema, theater, and art only as weapons in the current cold war.

When questioned point-blank on whether composers are forced to accept the criticism of their works, the Gerasimov of Soviet music, Yuri Shaporin, answered in the best tradition of Communist casuistry:

"It seems to me that this question is somewhat abstract and

fails to take actual conditions into account. How can one speak of compulsion, if the Soviet composers themselves acknowledge the justice of the directions of the Central Committee of the Party? If an artist in his heart understands the correctness of the directions of the Party and hears the voice of his people, then he will follow these directions quite voluntarily and without any compulsion."

But suppose he does not "hear the voice of his people," does not understand Party directions correctly, and does not follow them voluntarily?

The answer was provided by the Congress of Soviet Composers, held in April 1948 on the heels of the January conference with Zhdanov. A number of composers, including Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Miaskovsky, Popov, and Muradeli, either remained silent or apologized for their mistakes in an "unsatisfactory" fashion. The silences and apologies were interpreted as a "continuation of a line of deliberate individualism condemned by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, opposition to the collective will, and unwillingness to enter the mainstream of basic democratic and realistic Soviet art."

I had already been expelled from the Soviet Union by the time additional confessions of error and promises to behave were demanded, and do not know whether all the "guilty" obliged (they probably did), but I do know from newspaper reports that Dmitri Shostakovich again apologized for his work.

Prokofiev and Miaskovsky, two of the three greatest living Soviet composers, ignored the congress. Miaskovsky, old, sick, and heartbroken, has withdrawn from the world. Prokofiev, while not attending, paid lip service to the congress in a diplomatic letter that equivocally praised the Central Committee's decree on music published on February 10 as one that "clearly separated the healthy tissues from the un-

healthy." Confident, cynical man of the world and incomparable master that he is, Prokofiev cares for nothing but his music. Possessed of a need to create as elemental as the need to breathe and love, Prokofiev indifferently tolerates everything, including Zhdanov's insolent dictates, as long as he can go on composing his music. Praise, as well as criticism, from the powers that he has little meaning to him, except as it affects his income, particularly his ability to keep up his country home on the bank of the Moskva River. There he does much of his writing, surrounded by the quiet loveliness of the Russian landscape.

Unfortunately for himself Shostakovich possesses none of Prokofiev's cynical indifference and confidence. The only thing Shostakovich shares with his older colleague is a passion for music and an overpowering, almost physical need to compose. They differ even in their methods of working. Never without a piece of paper and pencil, Prokofiev keeps jotting down every melody or phrase that occurs to him. Shostakovich rarely, if ever, records a single note until a whole piece is completed in his mind. Forever thinking of the growing composition, listening to it unfold, he seems absent-minded even when he is participating in conversation.

Shostakovich, the great musician who looks like a school-boy even at thirty-nine, is as sincere a Soviet patriot as any starry-eyed Komsomol. He thinks of himself as a "non-party Bolshevik" to whom criticism by the Kremlin signifies failure as a Soviet citizen and composer. Words of apology and confession of sin, which sound hollow and plain dishonest in the mouths of many of the composers who admitted "individualism," "formalism," and "falling under the influence of the decadent bourgeois West," have a profound meaning for Shostakovich. He must have been deeply shaken when he said at the Composers' Congress:

"I know the Party is right, I know that the Party wishes

me well, and that I must search and find concrete creative roads which will lead me toward a realistic Soviet people's art. It would be impossible for me not to look for such roads, because I am a Soviet artist. I must and I want to find a way into the hearts of the Soviet people."

When Shostakovich was castigated by *Pravda* in 1936 for sins not unlike those with which he is charged now, he replied in similar words. Eighteen months later he came out with his magnificent Fifth Symphony, probably the best composition he has ever written. The Bolsheviks like to take credit for it. "Our criticism," they say, "helped him see the light." But I believe he saw the light *despite* that criticism. His youth and his genius and his deep roots in the world's classical and modern music helped him see the light, and not those men of steel who built a wall between him and the world which acclaims and needs him, and which he, like all other Soviet artists, needs desperately.

Usually pensive and moody, he was as happy as a child when he was permitted to go to Prague in the early summer of 1947, to a music festival where I saw thousands of music lovers acclaim him as the world's greatest living composer. But he cannot go to England, or to America where millions await him. This is particularly pathetic in view of the fact that in the past five years, anticipating such a trip, he has been studying English.

I do not agree with the political views expressed in his public statements, and I am particularly appalled by his failure to discern the Kremlin's reactionary role in the field of arts, but I believe in his sincerity.

Happily married and the father of two lovely children, Shostakovich is nevertheless one of the loneliest men in the world. He is burdened with all sorts of "social duties" such as serving on the Stalin Prize Committee, on the advisory board of the Arts Committee, and on the board of the Com-



posers' Union. In addition, he is a professor at the Moscow and Leningrad conservatories. One might suspect that the greatest Soviet composer of his day is purposely given all these duties so that he will have little time for creative work. Indeed, Shostakovich told me on several occasions that he composes almost exclusively during the summer months, which he spends at the Composers' Union rest home. Unlike Prokofiev and Miaskovsky, he has not been able to afford the luxury of a *datcha* (country home).

During the war Shostakovich lost the only great friend he ever had. This friend was Ivan Solertinsky, a music critic and lecturer, the most eccentric, self-confident, and brilliant conversationalist in Leningrad. This city still considers itself the cultural capital of Russia, relegating to Moscow the distinction of being Russia's largest village.

Since the death of Solertinsky, Shostakovich has no one to go to with his creative problems. Being the "nerves of our age," as one Soviet critic aptly defined the nature of his genius, Shostakovich perceives the world in the most tragic light. All his works composed since 1941 are integral parts of the great tragedy of war and the postwar world. Even his Ninth Symphony, which sounded gay and frivolous, following as it did the monumental Eighth with its boundless horror and grief, assumes upon rehearing the spectral merriment of a dance on a grave.

The official Soviet music critics are not particularly concerned over Shostakovich's "atonality" and his "chaotic sounds." Actually he has been achieving a melodiousness and "clarity of musical language," to use his own expression, which are beyond the reach of the mediocrities favored by the men in the Kremlin. But these men fear the pessimism, the tragic impact of Shostakovich's music, at a time when the official line is to glorify the non-existent freedom and democracy in the land of victorious socialism.

## IN ANGER AND PITY

I can see only hard days ahead for Shostakovich, who, for all his patriotism, cannot help remaining true to himself. For that matter the hard days started for all creative minds in the Soviet Union over two years ago, and their end is not in sight.

# PART SEVEN

## Forty Million Books by Americans



## Chapter 20

The vast distances separating the United States and Russia, and the various currency and political restrictions in the latter, have made American literature the primary source of the Russians' knowledge of life and ways in the United States. Therefore the story of the penetration and spread of American literature in old Russia and in the Soviet Union assumes a significance far beyond its literary aspects. Among other things, American literature has to a large degree occasioned the current passive resistance inside the U.S.S.R. to the Kremlin's hate-America campaign.

Forty million copies of nearly one thousand books by 201 American writers and poets have been distributed in Soviet Russia since 1917. No statistics are available on the number of books by Americans published in tsarist Russia, but these, too, ran into the millions.

At the top of the list is Jack London, whose works have appeared in 567 editions comprising 10,367,000 copies. Mark Twain comes second with 3,000,000 copies. Upton Sinclair is a close third with 2,889,000, followed by Ernest Thompson Seton's 2,011,000 and O. Henry's 1,403,000. Bret Harte is practically in the million class with his 969,000 copies, including two wartime editions.

These figures and the information contained in the next paragraph were eagerly provided late in 1945 by bald, soft-

spoken Mikhail Apletin, secretary to the Foreign Section of the Writers' Union. But such has been the effect of the anti-foreigner campaign in the country that when I applied to him some two years later for permission to read up on folklore in the library of the Writers' Union he shamefacedly directed me to the Foreign Office, which did nothing about it.

Other American writers whose works have appeared in Russia since 1917, in the descending order of their popularity, are: Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Sinclair Lewis, Edward Bellamy, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (this applies only to the *Song of Hiawatha*, issued in 123,835 copies in a translation, by the Nobel Prize winner Ivan Bunin, so magnificent that many consider it a greater work of art than the original), Pearl Buck, Erskine Caldwell, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Conrad Bercovici, Edgar Allan Poe, Jack Conroy, Walt Whitman, John Dos Passos, Langston Hughes, Michael Gold, Waldo Frank, Irvin S. Cobb, Eugene O'Neill (25,000 copies of a one-volume collection of seven plays), Ben Hecht, Edna Ferber, Rex Beach, Ring Lardner, Claude McKay, Booth Tarkington, Maxwell Bodenheim, Zona Gale, Louis Bromfield, Harry Kemp, and Nathan Asch.

American literature first came to Russia slightly over a century and a quarter ago, and rapidly became an important factor in shaping Russian thought. Its literary and political influence spread the revolutionary spirit of American democracy. The political aspects of this influence were particularly telling with generations of Russians who fought the tsar. It considerably receded in importance after the Revolution of 1917.

Translation was still in its infancy in the Russia of the 1820s. At that time Russian versions of the works of foreign authors were to all intents and purposes unavailable to the common people. The art of translation was pioneered by

Vasili Zhukovsky, poet and tutor to Alexander II. Zhukovsky translated foreign verse into a Russian that became the language of modern Russian poetry, supplanting the archaic if vigorous tongue of Mikhail Lomonosov and Gavriil Derzhavin. The publication date of Zhukovsky's Russian version of Gray's *Elegy* is regarded by outstanding Russian literary critics as the birthday of modern Russian poetry.

Zhukovsky established a high standard for Russian translators, among whom one finds some of the country's best poets, including Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Afanasi Fet, Konstantin Balmont, Valery Briusov, Ivan Bunin, and Boris Pasternak. Similarly, Russian translators of prose are, on the whole, superior to the translators of Russian writings, both American and British. This may be accounted for by the fact that American literature began to penetrate into Russia much earlier than Russian literature into the United States.

Benjamin Franklin was the first American author to be translated into Russian. *Poor Richard's Almanac* appeared in St. Petersburg in 1784, followed ten years later by the Moscow publication of *Excerpts from Franklin's Notes with a Brief Description of His Life and Several of His Works*. In 1789 Franklin was unanimously elected a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, despite Catherine II's dislike and fear of the American revolutionist.

But it was really the interest in the American Revolution and the admiration for the things it stood for that were responsible for the great interest of Russian intellectuals in American letters. A typical example of their views on the United States is contained in the concluding passage of the first Russian biography of George Washington, written and published in 1784 by Nikolai Novikov, a pioneer in publishing and education in Russia.

"Rome had its Camilla, Greece had Leonidas, Sweden Gus-

tav, England Russell and Sydney. These glorious heroes, however, do not compare to Washington: he founded a republic which will doubtless be a haven for liberty banished from Europe by luxury and corruption."

Admiration for American democracy gave rise to an almost mystical feeling among Russians that there was a preordained similarity in the destiny of the United States and Russia. This feeling, which has retained some force in the Soviet Union to this day, has been shared by many Americans and even by men of other countries. Walt Whitman gave it eloquent expression in his *Letter to a Russian*. The French historian, De Tocqueville, in his famous book on American democracy, insisted that only two great modern peoples were heading toward a magnificent future—the Russians and the Americans.

The Decembrists, members of a revolutionary organization of tsarist officers whose uprising on December 14, 1825, was the first in a series of Russian revolutions, were inspired by America, as well as by France. They patterned their planned reorganization of Russia on the Constitution of the United States. Whether or not the Decembrists knew of Philip Freneau's lines on liberty:

*To Russia's frozen lands  
The generous flame expands,*

they drew freely on United States history and the lives of its heroes, and made American democracy a subject for study for future generations of Russian revolutionaries.

The fresh political winds that blew from western Europe and the United States prepared the ground for American literature at just about the time it was beginning to come into its own. The first works to be translated were those of Washington Irving and Fenimore Cooper. Their books appeared in Russia in the twenties and thirties of the last century, translated from French versions. *The Sketch Book* was the first of



Irving's works to appear in the Russian language. Interest in him continued after the Revolution of 1917, with 259,000 copies of his works published by the Soviets. But now the period of his influence has passed.

Fenimore Cooper made his first appearance in Russia with *The Spy*, published in Moscow in 1825, a poor translation from Sir Walter Scott's French version. Cooper's popularity grew from novel to novel until *The Last of the Mohicans* made him the friend and companion of millions of Russians. Cooper's most ardent admirer was the father of modern Russian literary criticism, Vissarion Belinsky, who characterized *The Pathfinder* as possessing the power and insight of a Shakespearean drama. "I was beside myself with joy," wrote Belinsky, "when Lermontov [poet and prose writer, second in importance only to Pushkin in the history of Russian literature] told me that Cooper was greater than Walter Scott; that there was more depth and creative unity in Cooper's works."

Thanks to Cooper, Russian children, like Americans, have for generations played Indians, but American kids have been deprived of the additional joys and heartaches of "running away to America," so wistfully depicted in Anton Chekhov's short story, "Montigomo the Hawk's Claw." Maxim Gorky once remarked: "Reading the memoirs of Russian revolutionaries, we frequently find them paying tribute to Cooper's writings as first-class educators which developed in them a sense of honor, courage, and action."

If anything, Cooper's popularity with the Russians has grown since the Revolution. Soviet publishing houses have put out two editions of his collected works, in addition to 330,000 copies of his more popular novels.

Few books have moved the hearts of men with the power of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Russia has been no exception. Millions of children in old and new Russia,

like children all over the rest of the world, weep and laugh over the story. Generations of Russians have used the book as a political weapon in their own struggles, particularly in the struggle for the liberation of the serfs in Russia. Leo Tolstoy himself said he wished he could write a Russian *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The book has not lost its significance as a political weapon to the present day, for, whenever the problems of the American Negro are discussed in the Soviet Union, references to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are inevitable. It has been re-issued fourteen times since the Revolution.

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of Edgar Allan Poe on Russian poetry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first translations of Poe appeared in 1849, but only with the emergence of the Symbolist school in the nineties did Poe's verse become one of the most important foreign influences in the history of Russian poetry. Konstantin Balmont, leading poet of the Symbolist school, who translated all of Poe's works, spoke of the American as the "first Symbolist of the nineteenth century" and, more ecstatically, as "my adored singer of songs, the most starlike of all troubadours of eternity, lost wandering on our planet." In an even more telling passage, Balmont wrote: "Poe's poetry is closer than any other to our complicated sick souls; it is the very embodiment of majestic consciousness that stares in horror at the inevitability of the wild chaos encompassing it on every side."

Poe's prose has not taken as firm root in Russia as his poetry, though it has left its imprint on the writings of a number of Russian authors. The most outstanding of them is Dostoyevsky. The Russian poet, Valery Briusov, once referred to Poe as "Dostoyevsky's precursor and teacher in the field of subtle psychology." A lesser but quite important Russian author strongly influenced by Poe was Leonid Andreyev, who spoke

of the American as the world's "greatest madman, who is at the same time its most perfect logician."

Walt Whitman is the only American poet who rivals Poe's popularity in Russia. But as in the United States, recognition came to him much more slowly. Translations of Whitman's verse began to appear only at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the first, incomplete edition of *Leaves of Grass* was issued in 1907. The previous attempts of such men as Turgenev and Tolstoy to introduce the good gray poet to the Russians failed.

Even when that indefatigable poet and translator, Balmont, finally got to Whitman and translated a number of his poems into the Russian, they went practically unnoticed. When he finally did become known in Russia it was through a curious incident involving a young literary critic and children's poet, Kornei Ivanovich Chukovsky. Here is his own account of it:

"A drunken Russian sailor accosted me in the harbor, trying to sell me a bottle of rum he had smuggled through. I told him I didn't drink. Then he forced a little volume into my hands, winked at me and whispered: 'Forbidden book.' It was Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. I paid twenty kopeks for it and before I ever got to my house I became a Whitmanite. I sank in that book like a nail in the ocean. Its colossal breadth completely swallowed me. I began to perceive everything through Walt Whitman and, as I kept reading *Song of Myself* it seemed to me it actually was about myself. And I understood then that my life's purpose was to preach Whitman."

And indeed Chukovsky, now in his seventies, has been spreading the gospel of Whitman for over two score years, constantly improving his translation of *Leaves of Grass*, the tenth edition of which appeared in 1944.

The introduction of Whitman to Russian readers proved in the beginning to be an ungrateful and sometimes dangerous task. In 1905, in connection with the publication of *Pioneers!*

*O Pioneers*, Chukovsky was persecuted on a charge of "shaking the fundamentals of the state." In 1911 a complete edition of *Leaves of Grass* was destroyed by order of the Moscow court. In 1913 the police of Kharkov, Odessa, Riga, and Vilna forbade Chukovsky, then on a lecture tour, even to mention the American poet. Had the tsars been as printed-word-conscious as the Bolsheviks, the Whitman apostle might have spent much of his life in Siberia.

Even some of the literary critics accused Chukovsky of inventing Walt Whitman "in order to avoid responsibility for his own tasteless, anarchic verse." Chukovsky once told me, that one reviewer had gone so far as to accuse him of insanity, adding that he had retained just enough sense to invent a Walt Whitman to weather the storm of unfavorable criticism. However, the Futurist poets who emerged on the Russian literary scene after the Revolution of 1905 eagerly embraced the good gray poet. To them he was as much of a revelation as to Chukovsky. Whitman exerted a marked influence on most of them, including Vladimir Mayakovsky, called by Stalin "the greatest poet of our Soviet era," the only great poet that era has produced.

After the Revolution the triumphant Soviets embraced Walt Whitman as they did Jack London. *Pioneers! O Pioneers* was printed in leaflet form and distributed in tens of thousands of copies among Red Army men and civilians alike. An adaptation of *Europe* was staged in July 1918 at the Petrograd Palace of Proletarian Culture. One of the very first books published by the Petrograd Soviet was Whitman's verse, issued early in 1918 under the title *Poetry of the Democracy of the Future*.

Mark Twain and Jack London are the two American writers who have come to mean most to Russian readers. Their books may be found in the libraries of Russia's greatest political leaders, artists, and scientists, in peasant huts, in the dressing

rooms of ballerinas, and on the shelves of every village and factory library in Russia.

In addition to numerous pre-Revolutionary publications of Mark Twain, the first twenty-six years of the Soviet regime have given the lovers of American literature a fine edition of his complete works and nearly three million copies of his most popular books. Even during the war Soviet publishing houses kept issuing Mark Twain, and several editions were printed by the Red Army and Red Navy publishing branches.

Mark Twain's first story to appear (1872) in a Russian translation, "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," launched him on a career as one of the most popular, and certainly the best loved, foreign writers in the land of aristocratic Turgenev, brooding Dostoyevsky, and pan-humanistic Tolstoy. The story appeared in the St. Petersburg *Stock Exchange News*, accompanied by an article on Mark Twain which spoke of him as a writer distinguished "by a highly original gift molded under the influence of the completely new life springing up in the deserts of California and the mountains of Sierra Nevada." Warning readers not to expect literary finesse from a young gold seeker and Mississippi pilot, the paper paid tribute to his "inexhaustible supply of humor, vivid imagination, powerful fantasy, and unaffected gaiety."

From then on, stories by Mark Twain began to appear regularly in Russian papers and magazines. The very selections of stories in *Homeland Notes*, the first magazine to print (1877) Mark Twain, serve to show that the Russians immediately appreciated him as a brilliant humorist and storyteller, as a satirist and philosopher.

Mark Twain's popularity with the Russians is exceeded only by Jack London's. No foreign author can touch London in Russia—not even Victor Hugo, whose books have been translated into forty of the languages of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. Richard Henry Little has given a vivid account of

what Jack London meant to Russians during the Revolution: "Never was an author so idolized as Jack London is among the Russians. Apparently all his works have been translated into Russian. And I found them everywhere. Officers passed them around from one to another, and I often have seen little groups of soldiers sitting in the woods, while the man who could read was doing so aloud to the eager delight of the awe-struck group around him. At every mess the officers wanted me to tell them all I knew about Jack London."

Lenin himself shared the soldiers' interest, and when he was slowly dying, his wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, read Jack London's stories to him. He did not like everything she read, Krupskaya relates. London the teller of stories intrigued Lenin; London the social critic bored him. The majority of Russian readers have felt the same way. *Martin Eden*, *The Sea Wolf*, and *White Fang* are more popular than *The Iron Heel* and *The War of the Classes*.

If possible, London became even more popular during the war. London's virile style, which for years has had an influence on lighter Russian fiction, was copied in many Soviet wartime stories. Vadim Kozhevnikov's popular "March-April," can serve as a typical example. From beginning to end, the story is written in a Jack London manner. It recounts the adventure of a Soviet officer and a girl radio operator who were parachuted down to spy and wreak havoc on the enemy rear. Stalin was so impressed with this tale that he telephoned from the Kremlin to the front line to congratulate the young author.

The ancient, steadily growing mutual sympathy of both nations formed an excellent background for the mounting interest of the Russians in American literature. But the difficult and dramatic period that followed World War I all but wrecked that friendship by distorting the study of American

literature. The things that are happening right now in Soviet-American political and cultural relations are painfully reminiscent of that earlier process. Just as now, the post-World War I period was characterized by mutual fear, suspicion, and condemnation.

The Russians deeply resented American intervention in Archangel and Siberia, the "Red scare" with its witch hunts, and the "Soviet Ark." They were bitter over the fact that the United States Government did not recognize the U.S.S.R. until 1933. American resentment was just as self-righteous and violent in its expression, directed as it was against the separate Bolshevik peace with Germany, the Red terror, the repudiation by the Soviets of foreign debts, militant atheism and, finally, propaganda against capitalism, conducted in the United States and other countries.

It was against this background of mutual recrimination and resentment that the "bad boys" of American literature—Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, and Theodore Dreiser—became widely popular in Soviet Russia. Other writers of social significance soon joined the big three. Among them were John Dos Passos, Langston Hughes, Erskine Caldwell, John Steinbeck, and Richard Wright.

In Soviet publishing houses at least, Upton Sinclair grew to rival in popularity the darling of the Russian readers, Mark Twain. Sinclair, of course, was known in Russia long before the Revolution. Leo Tolstoy strongly recommended *The Jungle* for publication in Russia as soon as it came out in 1906, saying the book was "remarkable" and praising Sinclair's knowledge of the daily life of American workers. Simultaneously Tolstoy took him to task for his socialistic views. Ironically enough, years later, in 1915, Lenin did too. He said Sinclair was a "socialist of emotion, without theoretical background. He poses the problem in a simple way: indignant over the approaching war, he seeks salvation from it in socialism."

Still, after the Revolution, Sinclair's books literally flooded the Soviet market. Seven editions of his collected works appeared in five years, supplemented by mass issues of his most popular novels. Many of them, particularly *The Jungle* and *Jimmie Higgins*, became compulsory reading for all students of social science and the structure of capitalist society.

Soviet readers have found Sinclair Lewis artistically more satisfying, especially in *Arrowsmith*, which many Russians regard as the best American novel. These readers do not claim a similar honor for Lewis' *Kingsblood Royal*, but that book has already been translated into the Russian, giving the Soviet critics a chance to recapitulate with glee one of America's most distressing problems.

Dreiser's recognition closely paralleled that of Lewis. Practically every one of Dreiser's novels has been printed and sold in Russia in numbers great enough to make them best sellers in any man's country.

Apart from all these men, in a class by himself, stands Ernest Hemingway, who has been a veritable revelation to Soviet readers, particularly to intellectuals and writers. He is the most eagerly read and passionately discussed contemporary foreign author. His works, when they can be found in secondhand bookshops, command record prices. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is, as far as I was able to ascertain, Hemingway's only work not yet published in the Soviet Union. In that novel he was not kind to Soviet-controlled Communist leadership. However, the manuscript of a masterly translation, with proper deletions, of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was completed years ago, and has been read by most members of the Writers' Union, by editors, literary critics, and some laymen. The novel is a sensation in Russia, even though it has never been published.

Critical essays about Ernest Hemingway have been written



in Russia by the score. Ivan Kashkin, one of the best Soviet critics, and certainly the best living translator of English prose, has completed a book on Hemingway, but it has not been published. It probably will not be in the foreseeable future. A book in praise of a foreign non-Communist contemporary author is interpreted in Russia these days as "fawning before things foreign." But many a young writer is guilty of this mortal sin, for there is the beginning of a Hemingway school in present-day Soviet fiction. Konstantin Simonov, author of *Days and Nights* and *The Russian Question*, editor in chief of a major Soviet magazine, and a secretary of the Writers' Union, is a somewhat unwilling member of this group.

A determined attempt is in process to make the books by United States authors engaged in arousing American consciences in the face of American complacency the sole mirrors of life in the United States. It may seem strange that the books by these authors have not completely destroyed the almost universally accepted Russian conception of the United States as a man-made paradise, and of Americans as muscular, upright, free, and happy demigods. The fact is that the very freedom in which these authors write is to Soviet citizens a miracle all by itself, belying many an official assertion. Moreover the stark picture of America the Russians are getting from our socially significant books doesn't result necessarily in a condemnation of America. It is far more likely that these books appear to them as manifestations of the same humanism and passionate honesty, the same suffering and the same quest which their own classical writers reflect. This may sound strange to many Americans, but it is true, nevertheless, as I have found out from numerous talks with Soviet writers over a period of years, and from a study of recorded reactions by library readers in a number of Soviet cities.



# PART EIGHT

## Answers to Questions on Russia



## Chapter 21

Since my expulsion from Moscow, I have addressed many audiences in different parts of the United States. I have also spoken to hundreds of individuals about the Soviet Union. And everywhere I have been confronted with numerous questions which reveal a tremendous interest in our erstwhile Ally who is now almost universally thought of in the United States as a potential enemy. The questions also show a no less universal anxiety over the possibility of war between the United States and the U.S.S.R.

Most of the questions fall into three categories:

First, war. Is war with Russia inevitable? Is the Kremlin trying to precipitate an armed conflict? What do the Russian people think of it? Would they support a war against the United States? Is Soviet industry ready for the titanic effort? How does our war potential compare with that of the Soviet Union?

Second, what about Stalin and the Politburo? How would Stalin's death affect the situation at home and abroad? Would there be a struggle for power among the men surrounding him? Would organized opposition to the Communists emerge? Would the Communist Party fall apart? Would the Soviet Union mend its ways?

Finally, what about the standard of living in Russia? How has it been affected by the uneasy peace? Do the Russians

grumble? Are they happy? Do they support the five-year plan which gives transport and heavy industry priority over the things that make for the amenities in life?

I shall attempt to answer these questions, beginning with the last group.

The Russians have a magnificent sense of humor. It has helped them to take in their stride the hardships which history has not spared them. This sense of humor is proving a relieving feature now, during the stern days of postwar anxieties and sacrifices.

Two anecdotes about the standard of living in the U.S.S.R. stood out, at the time of my departure, among the host of jokes circulating in the Soviet capital.

A Russian boasts to a foreigner: "At the end of the current five-year plan we shall have an airplane for every third citizen. At the end of the following five-year plan we shall have an airplane for every other citizen. And at the end of one more five-year plan we shall have an airplane for every single citizen of our great country."

"But what do you need so many airplanes for?"

"Why, suppose you want to buy a box of matches, a comb, or a pair of shoelaces, and there are none in Moscow. You hop into your plane, fly down to Gorky or Odessa, and buy yourself a box of matches, a comb, or a pair of shoelaces."

The second story involves two Russians.

"Well, Comrade," one says, "things are looking promising these days. By 1952 we'll have five atom bombs, we'll put them into five suitcases, get them over to the United States, plant them in five strategic cities—New York, Pittsburgh, Washington, Chicago, Detroit—terrorize America into submission, and the world is ours!"

"You're wrong, Comrade," the other replied. "I don't think that by 1952 we can produce as many as five suitcases."

That, in a nutshell, is what is happening to the Russian con-

sumer and his standard of living. Plants, not people, are at the top of the priority list. An intensive drive in transport and heavy industry has left little labor or material for shoes, textiles, radios, and suitcases.

Never high, the Soviet citizen's standard of living was appallingly low during the war. It has been rising slowly ever since, but will probably not reach prewar levels before 1950.

The biggest boost to the standard of living came in December 1947. Currency was devaluated, wages were frozen, rationing was ended, prices were cut drastically. There were two immediate results: savings were virtually wiped out, and the cost of living dropped sharply. The first was a blow, but the second meant increased buying power for the ruble, so that the Russian citizen could live on his current income.

Price control before the December reform rested on a three-price system. There were government-owned shops where the prices were low but ration coupons were required. There were the so-called commercial stores—the government-owned and -operated “legal black market” shops where prices were exorbitant but coupons were not required. Finally, there was the “open market,” where peasants and co-operative stores sold goods at prices comparable to those in the commercial stores. When rationing ended, all government stores began to sell food at previous “ration prices,” or in some cases less. Prices on consumer goods were drastically reduced.

Russian citizens, therefore, experienced a real improvement in their living standards. Food spending increased to such a degree that much less money was used for other things. Theaters were half empty, and expensive restaurants fared badly.

A distribution crisis in the summer of 1948 resulted in hour-long queueing for bread and sugar in Moscow, but supplies were adequate, and the difficulty was chalked up to lack of transportation facilities. But the bureaucrats who have al-

ways had special privileges have retained them even now. As before, they continued to get food and consumer goods unavailable to the mass of the people. The Russians have a name for it: "closed dining rooms" or "closed stores," closed in the sense of being limited to a certain group, also limited in price—lower prices. The rule required that the purchaser appear in person.

There are a number of such places in Moscow, and I know of one which lay on my route from the house to the office and United States Embassy on a street which fittingly was called Comintern Street, but was renamed not long ago Kalinin Street, near the corner facing the Kremlin. The Russians would come in their chauffeur-driven cars, would walk into the shop with the gait of men unused to walking much, would stare at passers-by with unseeing eyes, and soon return with neat packages containing food or consumer goods.

There are all sorts of closed stores for food and consumer goods. Some carry only a few things; others, for the top bureaucrats, have a great variety, everything the heart desires.

A man's position in Soviet society is in a way determined by the store with which he is registered. The M.K. (Moscow Communist Party Committee) store is equivalent to a Park Avenue address. The stores for generals and academicians are only one degree lower.

We, correspondents and diplomats, had our store too. But whereas the "Park Avenue" Russians could spend their money limit on anything they wanted, we were limited to a certain ration. Thus, with a quota equal to that of an ambassador, a correspondent could buy no more than ten pounds of butter a month, but these Russians could spend all their money on butter alone, if they desired. Now there are no rations, but the closed stores for privileged Soviet officials still exist.

A Russian I knew lived across the street from the "diplomatic shop" where foreigners bought their food rations, which



were incomparably better than those for Soviet citizens. The five-year-old could not help seeing foreigners come out of the store with things which most Russians could only dream about: chocolate, fruit, white bread. At a birthday party given for him, the adults started a game among the kids. Each of them was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up. And they were supposed to act out their various professions. The kids wanted to be what most children of that age do the world over: a policeman, a fireman, a truck driver. But my five-year-old friend said with absolute confidence: "I want to be a foreigner," and his act consisted of buying in an imaginary shop all the good things he saw foreigners carry out of the store.

Incidentally the foreigners in Moscow can supplement their supplies by importing from abroad a specified amount at a nominal duty. But heaven help the foreigner who receives something that is not on the list.

In 1947 I asked a friend of ours to send a pair of shoes and six pairs of nylons for Nila as a surprise Christmas present. My request contained specific instructions to send nothing else, but the friend used her initiative, and thought it very cute of her to put in her package over a pound of toys, including warships, cannon, airplanes, and tanks, as a surprise gift for me, the "famous war correspondent." When I was told by the customs how much duty I'd have to pay for the toys, I hastily disclaimed any interest in them. But the customs officer said he could not let me have only part of the parcel even if I voluntarily refused to take the remaining part. It was all or nothing! And Nila's Christmas present was long overdue.

Well, I paid some fifty cents duty for the shoes and the stockings and twenty-eight dollars for the toys.

While I was waiting for the parcel to be brought over to me, an old woman came up to the window where I was receiving

my Christmas gifts. She was in a tattered old coat, her head was wrapped up in a shawl that had known better days, and the galoshes on her feet were so torn that each was sticking to the foot with the help of a string.

"I see by your clothes that you are a foreigner," she said to me. "I wonder if you can give me advice. I am sending food to help my poor sister in Paris. You know things are very bad there. I am trying to send things that are most nourishing, and I don't know whether I am doing right by sending cocoa instead of chocolate bars."

Because the purchasing power of the ruble is now much greater, Russians are eager to earn as much as possible in order to buy the food and consumer goods they could not get or could not afford before the reform. The effect on industry has been marked. Since practically all production is on a piecework basis, production tends to be as high as possible. City workers' absenteeism has reached the lowest point ever recorded. On collective farms there is a rush to put in the maximum number of "labor days" to earn rubles.

It is difficult to estimate what the average Russian earns. There are no official statistics. The estimates vary from 500 to 750 rubles a month. Because of the piecework basis of production, however, some workers can and do earn as much as 2500 to 5000 rubles a month. Other workers' earnings, on the other hand, can be as low as 100 to 150 rubles a month. In addition to what he earns on his regular job, many a Russian does odd jobs on the side.

An important consideration in figuring family income is the fact that almost everybody works in the Soviet Union, including housewives. The result is that the ratio between the family income and that of any of its members is higher in Russia than in the United States.

Adding to the value of actual income is the low price of rent and utilities. Gas, electricity, and telephone service are

not as generally available as in the United States, due to lack of facilities, but when they are available they are within easy financial reach. The demand is far from being met at present but the installation of additional facilities is proceeding, even if at a slow rate.

Numerous services and aids are provided by the government: sick and pregnancy leaves, annual paid holidays, bonuses, medical attention, training and education, nurseries, and allowances for large families. The Soviet government claims that these services add thirty-eight per cent to a Soviet citizen's actual monetary income.

The managerial class did not fare as well as the workers in the 1947 reform. Managers' salaries are fixed, unlike those of production workers, and range from 400 to 3000 rubles per month. Consequently it is quite possible for production workers to earn more than the factory manager. Under the rationing system, however, the managers were able to take advantage of their privileged positions to get at low prices items unavailable to the average citizen. To this day they have priority on better housing, and the restaurants which factories run in Russia for the managerial and engineering personnel are much cleaner and better supplied than the eating places for the workers.

Even with this increased buying power, the Russian cannot afford very much more than essential food and housing. Little is left in his budget for clothes, entertainment, or extras. Still, in recent months shops have begun to display textiles, hardware, and crockery. These items are at least becoming available.

In a nutshell: every Russian today has enough to eat, even if he is not well fed. He can enjoy meat and butter perhaps twice a week, and even the poorest can buy enough bread, potatoes, vegetables, and sugar. The "How-do-you-do" anecdotes reflecting the hungry days of the recent past are quickly

disappearing in Russia. No longer are they telling the one about the conversation between two Russians:

"How do you do, Comrade?"

"Oh, I cannot complain. They treat me no worse than Lenin in his mausoleum."

"How is that?"

"They won't feed me and they won't bury me."

A recent bright note in the picture is the announcement that city dwellers may buy or build their own homes. A decree published in the summer of 1948 sanctions structures up to two stories in height, not exceeding five rooms. Rights of private purchase and inheritance are included in the ruling, which stems from an article in the Constitution providing that citizens may own personal property. Miners in the eastern and western coal-mining areas are permitted to buy homes on a ten-year payment plan. The measures may ease, in a small degree, the truly appalling congestion and lack of housing facilities which have accounted for a high degree of labor turnover in industry.

For the first time in Soviet history, too, the average Soviet citizen may soon be able to own a private car. That is, if he succeeds in earning a lot of money on the side. A small number of automobiles have been made available for private purchase. The lowest-priced car is the midget auto called Moskvich, which sells for \$1125, about one and a half times the average worker's yearly take-home pay.

Supplies of consumer goods of all kinds are now about sixty per cent greater than they were in 1945. Government stores and co-operatives are displaying a slowly increasing stock of cosmetics, household utensils, refrigerators, radios, phonographs, bicycles, and motorcycles.

Though living standards are obviously rising, they are doing so very slowly. The golden fleece being dangled before the

tired eyes of the Soviet citizen is industrial production comparable to, if not equaling, that of the United States. This is to be attained, step by step up the ladder of a planned recovery, by 1960. In the meantime the Soviet citizen will do without most of the amenities which he has never had anyway. He will continue to concentrate on the big things first. Perhaps, in 1960, this vast industrial giant which he is helping to build may turn to making washing machines or suitcases.

In the meantime all he can do is work hard, grumble, and make jokes.

The recent shake-up of the editorial board of *Crocodile*, Russia's only humor magazine, has made "underground" humor even more important and necessary than hitherto. *Crocodile* was attacked for its little jibes at the shortcomings in Soviet daily life, and has been ordered to direct its energies mainly toward "criticizing the bourgeois culture of the West, exposing its ideological emptiness and absurdity."

This order about completed the process of strait-jacketing Soviet humor. The other two outlets are the Moscow circus and the puppet theater. The great clown Karandash has been "advised" to concentrate on ridiculing the West in his circus tricks. And Sergei Obratzov, the world's leading puppeteer and head of the puppet theater, barely escaped serious trouble. He dared to debunk the Moscow subway. It is a magnificent subway, to be sure, but it is too small for Moscow's teeming population. Obratzov's puppets sang in a most elaborate oratorio fashion the lines:

*"We have a wonderful Metro,  
But we can't get into our Metro."*

The Kremlin did not appreciate the humor, and the puppets mock the Metro no longer.

IN ANGER AND PITY

The "underground" humor will now undoubtedly revive the joke in which one Russian asks the other:

"How do you do?"

"I feel as if I were a character in a ghost story."

"How is that?"

"The further I go, the more terrifying it gets."

## Chapter 22

No questions have been asked of me more frequently than those about Stalin's health. Obviously prompted by no polite concern, the interest stems from a misconception of Stalin's role in the Soviet Union. The question implies a hope that death of the Soviet leader or his withdrawal from public life would remove a blindfold from the eyes of the Russian people. Hence they would see the light of democracy and stop being difficult. The threat of war would disappear and we would all live happily ever after.

Nothing could be further removed from reality than this conception of the Soviet leader. True, Stalin carries tremendous prestige in the Soviet Union and wields great power. It is also true that his personal influence is felt throughout the country on every conceivable level of interest. But the Soviet Union is not a personal dictatorship. It is a dictatorship by a political party which adheres to sets of social, political, and economic theories and follows a vast and complicated program.

The party has a membership of six million, with a subsidiary group of ten million young Communists. Through them, the Party rules and dominates every aspect of the lives of two hundred million people inhabiting one sixth of the world. Moreover the inhuman efficiency of the Party machine controls the country's army, the secret police, and all industry and agriculture.

The Communist Party is not the official government of the U.S.S.R. although it is the only party in Russia, and a ruling party. The government has a parliament, called the Supreme Soviet, it has a Supreme Court, a cabinet, and a Premier. The Communist Party has its individual local cells, its All-Union Congress, its Central Committee, its Secretariat, consisting of the Politburo and the Orgburo, and its Secretary-General. Stalin is Premier of the Soviet Union and Secretary-General of the Communist Party. All positions of importance in the government are occupied by Party members.

A Party decision today automatically becomes Soviet law tomorrow.

The making of a Communist is rigorous and exacting. An aspirant to membership first becomes a "candidate" for a year. During that period his studies of "political grammar" and his manner of living are subjected to close scrutiny. Once examined and accepted by a Party committee at the end of his period of indoctrination, his time, talents, and energies are at the disposal of the Party. What it tells him to do he must do; where it sends him he must go. He is expected to display devotion to his socialist fatherland at his regular job and by engaging actively in some form of social work. He must keep in touch with the welfare of the community in which he lives or works, make regular visits to families in the neighborhood to conduct discussions on world affairs, and explain the tasks facing the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party realizes that the individual member must first understand the theory, tactics, and developments in the Party before he can spread Party doctrines. For this purpose the Party supports and runs an elaborate educational system. There are schools of "political grammar" for beginners. There are Communist universities and research institutes and also seminars and reading courses for professional propagandists and higher Party officials. Theoretical and practical



training in leadership and management are available for members of ability and diligence. In this way they may rise to higher positions.

Membership in the Communist Party frequently carries with it attractive amenities—an apartment, more food, better clothes, a secretary, use of a car and chauffeur, all of which comes with the big job which the person in question could not have achieved had he not been a Party member. But the membership also involves sacrifices. Personal comfort, convenience, preference must all be surrendered when the Party demands. Difficult, distasteful, or dangerous jobs frequently fall to the lot of the Communist. During collectivization he was sent to the farms, to face the infuriated peasants. During the war he was expected to aid the war effort on the home front as a “200 Percenter”—by turning out double his work quota. On the field of battle Communists were called upon to lead dangerous attacks. The resultant high losses among Communists made it easier for soldiers to join the Party than would have been normally possible. Before going into battle they could sign applications stating that if they lived they wanted to become Communists; if they died they wanted to die as Communists. In the first year of the war 752,000 joined the Party, in contrast with 233,000 in the previous year. Since such members had no adequate political instruction, a large percentage of them were later judged “undeserving.” Gradually, through inspection and examination, the Party has eliminated the “undeserving” or demoted them to the candidate status.

The greatest sacrifice demanded of a Communist Party member is that of his personal opinion. Without exception it must be subordinated to the Party line.

No individual, no matter how brilliant, may act upon his own will and judgment, disregarding the Party line, and remain in the good graces of the Party. Social thought, art, science—all must reflect official Communist ideology.

It is more difficult to stay in the Party than it is to be admitted. Expulsion may come for unwillingness, let us say, to accept the favored theory of genetics. It may also come for drunkenness, for showing contempt for other races, for associating with foreigners. During the periodic "cleansings" a Party member comes before the committee of examiners and hands over his red membership card. Then he must stand before the examiners, recite his autobiography, and give good reasons why the card should be given back to him. If the committee is not convinced he is dropped from Party membership. Thousands annually are thus eliminated. The severest standards are laid down by the Party, and it is quick to expel those who fail to meet the requirements. Mere numbers are no measure of the Party's strength. Membership could easily be doubled or tripled, but the bars are never let down except in times of stress, as during war, and every effort is made to weed out "undeserving" or "disruptive" elements at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Communist Party is therefore, by dint of a careful selection of its members, relentless instruction, and iron discipline, the all-powerful element in the Soviet Union today. It dictates everything, from foreign policy to the date of a chess tournament. It is a mistake to believe that jealousies and conflicts of any magnitude exist between the Communist Party and Russian government, the Red Army, or the secret service. All of the latter are but arms of the Communist Party, the real dictator of the Soviet Union. Stalin once defined the situation in no uncertain words: "No important political or organizational problem is ever decided by our Soviets and other mass organizations without directives from the Party. In this sense we may say that the dictatorship of the proletariat is substantially the dictatorship of the Party."

If free thought and free speech, as we know them in the United States, exist anywhere in the Soviet Union, they may

be found in some measure only on the top level of the Communist Party, in the Politburo. The Politburo usually consists of fourteen men who shape all policies of the Soviet Union, domestic as well as foreign. This supercabinet, over which Stalin presides as Secretary-General of the Communist Party, is probably the only truly democratic organization in Russia. All members may and do speak their minds freely, and all policies under discussion are open to free debate. At least all the Russians I have talked to about it seemed to think so.

The meetings, however, go on behind locked doors in the Kremlin. No one inside or outside Russia knows exactly what is said at these discussions. In all probability many clashes of temperament occur. When the discussion is over Stalin summarizes the debate. It is believed that he usually sides with the majority. Most Russians are convinced that Stalin is occasionally outvoted in Politburo meetings but never dares to break the inviolable rule of majority decision.

Because Russia is run by the Communist Party no startling overnight changes in Russian policies may be expected, should Stalin die or withdraw from public life. The Politburo would continue to direct Soviet policies, and whatever struggle of personalities went on at its sessions would be unknown to the public for a long time. The rule of unanimity would bar even the most ambitious from suddenly emerging to the fore. Whatever emergence there might be would be as slow and gradual as Stalin's was.

The death of Andrei Zhdanov in the late summer of 1948 removed the man slated for succession to Stalin's position as Secretary-General of the Communist Party in the opinion of most Russians. His death leaves an opening for which no one of the remaining Politburo members is qualified. It took Stalin and the Politburo fully two years to build up Zhdanov as the eventual leader of the Soviet people and as the theoretical guide of the Party. It was Zhdanov who created the Comin-

form, who declared war on the Marshall Plan, and who made all the recent policy-forming speeches. It was he who became the Party disciplinarian and regimented the Soviet writers, artists, and musicians into the Communist ideological line.

No one knows who will step into the place which Stalin apparently expected to leave to Zhdanov. The Communist Party Congress, which some reports indicate might be called early in 1949, will probably throw some light on the question of Stalin's successor. The Soviet leader is expected to announce his retirement from premiership at this Congress. And the Central Committee of the Communist Party which will be elected at this Congress may also go through the motions of electing a new Secretary-General.

The real problem is not to find the man who can be Prime Minister or Secretary-General. Practically any member of the Politburo, with the exception of Voroshilov and Khrushchev, is capable and tough enough to take on either of these posts. The problem is to find a man who also possesses the intellectual capacity and the personality to fit the role of leader—Stalin's one really great job.

The ruthless, fanatical Zhdanov had something of the leader about him. He was eloquent, erudite, and slightly theatrical; he had a biting sense of humor and was popularly regarded as the man who saved Leningrad from the Nazis. By comparison, the other men around Stalin appear dull and lacking in intellect, although most of the men are men of great experience and ability.

The best known is Vyacheslav Molotov, who is expected to be Russia's next Premier, simultaneously retaining his key position as Foreign Minister for as long as the postwar crisis lasts. More than any other single individual, he represents to the Soviet people the government and its cumbersome machine. Better than any other Politburo member, he knows how to make Soviet bureaucracy perform its functions. But no one

in the Soviet Union thinks of the dull, pedantic Molotov as the future leader.

The strongest potential rivals for the key job of Secretary-General of the Communist Party are Georgi Malenkov and Lavrenti Beria.

Georgi Malenkov is commonly described as the man with a card-index brain. Already Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party and chief of the personnel administration, he has the power to change anyone's job in the country. Thus most of the men now in key jobs owe their posts to him. In this respect his career resembles Stalin's. He learned many other techniques of Party leadership during his years of service as Stalin's personal secretary. During the war, when the Soviet leader devoted all his time and energies to the post of commander in chief, Malenkov was the virtual Party boss of the entire U.S.S.R.

He has also had invaluable experience in industrial leadership. Throughout the war he was dictator and co-ordinator of Russia's heavy industry, and bore direct responsibility for tank production.

The forty-five-year-old Malenkov has traveled little outside the Soviet Union, and is not well known inside the country itself. There is no popular appeal about this heavy, pale-faced, and frighteningly ruthless man.

The third most powerful man in the Soviet Union is Lavrenti Beria, who looks like an intellectual and co-ordinates the activities of the two government branches responsible for Soviet security: the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of State Security. He is commander in chief of the twenty divisions of the M.V.D. (Ministry of Internal Affairs) and the various Soviet secret agencies operating inside the U.S.S.R., in the satellite countries, and in the West. He directs the work of the Industrial Department of the M.V.D., which is in charge of some of the vast construction and mining projects in the

country. Millions of Soviet prisoners, political and non-political, Germans and Japanese, have served their terms working on his enterprises.

Probably the gravest of Beria's responsibilities today is the "special task" assigned him in 1946 of organizing military and industrial research on atomic fission.

Beria has some claim to intellectual attainments by virtue of having written a book on the history of the Communist Party in the Caucasus. Like Stalin, he is a Georgian.

He may be given the job of Secretary-General, but should Stalin and the Politburo decide to build him up as the leader in the eyes of the Soviet people, the fear in which he is held by virtue of his role in Soviet security measures will be an almost unsurmountable obstacle to overcome.

There is a "dark horse" among the Soviet leaders who seems to me a much more logical successor to Stalin than anyone else in Russia. He is Marshal Nikolai Bulganin, Minister of the Armed Forces and alternate member of the Politburo. Before the war this blue-eyed, handsome Russian was little known outside of Moscow. He had been mayor of the Soviet capital, administrator of a branch of heavy industry, head of the State Bank, and a Party functionary. During the war he was the eyes and ears of the Communist Party at the headquarters of Marshal Zhukov, the man whom Stalin feared as a possible Red Napoleon.

When Stalin was ready to relinquish his duties as Minister of the Armed Forces, the choice fell on Bulganin. His stock has been rising steadily since then, and he has been growing in popularity both with the Red Army and with the Soviet population.

One fact seems to be certain. Stalin's health is apparently still good enough to allow him to preside over the choice of

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his successor and help to build him up as Russia's future leader in the eyes of Party membership and the Soviet population.

The Bolsheviks have many ways of setting the stage. They can move one name up in the newspaper listings of Soviet leaders. They can change the order of their appearance at public functions. They can give a certain man frequent chances to deliver policy-making speeches.

Meanwhile Stalin, the Man of Steel, continues to be held before the Soviet people as the leader, the symbol of unity in this vast country. He is being identified with everything good and successful accomplished in Russia. Deified by the official press and radio as probably no man has ever been, Stalin is pictured as a demigod watching over his people, the creator of victory and of the new Russia, the all-wise, all-powerful "sun of the universe." Every man, woman, and child is urged to believe that Stalin takes a personal interest in his or her welfare. And every citizen is urged to pattern his life after the divine example of the Father of all the Russians.

This deification is being pushed with such recklessness that it often defeats its own purpose, either because it breeds revulsion or because it is ridiculous.

A volume called *Zemlya Russkaya* (*Russian Land*) contains a typically absurd passage:

"Stalin! Always we bear in our souls his dear name. And here, in the Kremlin, his presence touches us at every step. We walk on stones which he may have trod only recently. Let us fall on our knees and kiss those holy footprints."

Heights of inanity were reached at a recent conference of cooks, dietitians, and quartermasters of several military districts. The audience was solemnly assured from the platform that Stalin works ceaselessly to vary the national diet, figuring out food quotas and caloric content. They were told that Stalin issues personal directives on the subject. The men were urged

to display a similar "Stalin-like concern" for the foodstuffs they turn out for the soldiers.

Rarely a day passes without the Soviet papers carrying on the front pages letters from workers, peasants, or intellectuals, addressed to Stalin, full of idolatrous praise and servile gratitude. Bricklayers credit him with records they have made laying bricks, and authors say his genius helps them create their masterpieces.

This unrestrained adulation has reached such fantastic proportions that the population has begun to ridicule it in anecdotes. One such story tells about a contest for a monument to Russia's great national poet, Alexander Pushkin, who died more than a century ago. Many projects were submitted but they were all rejected as unworthy. But one day a project came along which was accepted unanimously and immediately, and the monument was completed in record time. When the tribute to the great poet was unveiled it proved to be a gigantic statue of Stalin reading a small volume of verse by Pushkin.

A version of the same joke tells of a huge statue of Stalin sitting in the pose of a listener. The inscription bears the legend: "Monument to the Great Composer Tchaikovsky."



## Chapter 23

I think no nation in the world detests the thought of another war more than Russia. Memories of World War II are still fresh, and many of the wounds have not yet healed. There is probably not a single family in the Soviet Union which has not endured a loss in the war. The last group of the twenty-five million Soviet citizens who were left homeless and lived in trenches and dugouts after the war were finally housed, even if inadequately, during the summer of 1948.

The Russian people have a deep-rooted aversion to war—even a victorious one. As a matter of record, no major war in Russian history has been a war of aggression. They were all forced on the Russian people from the outside.

Fortunately for the Russian peace of mind, Soviet citizens are not aware of the gravity of the international situation today. The controlled press and radio play down the subject of war. Were it played up as much as it is being played up in the United States, it would have had a serious negative effect on the morale of the Soviet people, and would have considerably lowered labor productivity.

It is my deepest conviction that the Kremlin also does not seek war now or at any time in the foreseeable future, all its provocative actions notwithstanding. I believe that the Soviet Union will stop short of war on any issue. Several factors lead to this conclusion. First, the Russian people are tired and are

traditionally opposed to war. Second, Russian war potential is low in comparison with that of the United States. Third, Communist leaders are convinced that time is on their side because capitalism bears the seeds of its own destruction and capitalist society is doomed to inevitable economic disaster and disintegration.

At the same time, real peace is not what the Kremlin wants either. A state of turmoil and confusion in the western European nations will fit in smoothly with Communist plans to foment mistrust of "Wall Street America" and to draw Europe into the Russian orbit.

Time is what Russia really wants. Given time, she can speed her reconstruction, build her war machine, forge the links that bind her satellite nations to her, and wait for a crippling economic depression to hit the United States.

A vital factor in what I believe to be the Kremlin's genuine reluctance to go to war is that Russia's war potential is nowhere near that of the United States. In 1947 Molotov reported that Russian production had reached the 1940 level. Compared with American production, which is half again what it was in 1940, this is not high, although, to be sure, our industries were not devastated by war. We are currently outrunning Russia four to one in all industries vital to a country's war potential. Put on a man-hour basis, the figures are even higher. Each American factory worker is producing six times as much as his Russian counterpart.

There is, however, an important element in these production comparisons which cannot be overemphasized. Despite the fact that Russian production is only at the 1940 level, its ability to produce war goods is approximately two and a half times greater than it was in 1940, its expenditures on war material fifty-one per cent greater in 1947 than in 1940. Nikolai Voznesensky, chief planner of the Soviet Union, says in his book, *War Economy of the U.S.S.R. in the Period of the*

*War of Liberation:* "Only an armed people equipped with strong productive capacity can prevent the expansion of monopolistic capitalism." And Russia is busy turning out several times the volume of war weapons being produced by the United States.

Consumer industries in Russia are being sacrificed to allow Russia to expand her capacity for the production of munitions. The resultant low standard of living, though creating a weakness in the over-all economy, is by no means an indication of a comparably low war potential.

The current five-year plan, which the Russians hope to fulfill a year ahead of time, in 1949, is progressing unequally. Some industries are ahead of schedule, others behind. Lack of uniformity is for the most part traceable to low labor productivity, which is frequently occasioned by poor housing and similar factors. In areas untouched by the war, as in the Urals, production has raced ahead of schedule. The devastated areas of western Russia are lagging, and unless production is drastically speeded they are unlikely to meet their 1950 goals. Construction snags here have resulted in the production of only half of the prewar capacity of the region, in contrast with its scheduled goal of a fifteen per cent increase over 1940.

Steel production has proved to be a major bottleneck in the Soviet Union's recovery drive. Although more than half of the blast furnaces in devastated areas have been restored, reports indicate that repairs have been patchwork, the efficiency of unskilled labor low, and the resultant output only about a fifth of prewar levels. This makes the attainment of the 1950 goal unlikely. Even if reached, this goal equals only thirty per cent of United States production.

Russia's coal production, which is one fourth of United States output, is ahead of prewar quantities. The increase, however, is due to the volume from low-quality mines, while the yield of high-quality coal in the Donbas area has still not

reached prewar levels. Oil output has likewise been below 1940 figures. The 1950 goal is only twelve per cent above those figures, the lowest of all increase targets in basic industries. Indications are that this low goal will be achieved by 1950, and possibly exceeded.

Machinery production has been expanding rapidly to a point considerably ahead of prewar levels. By 1950 Russians hope to have a stock of 1,500,000 machine tools, in comparison with the 1945 figure of 1,700,000 in the United States. The tractor and automobile industry (which also produces tanks and armored cars) is behind schedule. Only 29,000 tractors were produced in 1947, a pitifully small number in view of the fact that 137,000 out of a total of 530,000 were destroyed during the war. A newspaper report in the spring of 1948 made the glowing announcement that 1000 automobiles had been sent to the collective farms and that 9000 more would be supplied this year. The total number of collective farms is 242,000.

Transport in general is inadequate and overworked. Railroads, which carry four fifths of Russia's freight, have been repaired sufficiently to meet essential needs, but they have a difficult time of it. Civil aviation, however, is growing fast. Air lines are scheduled to extend almost 110,000 miles by 1950. New air-line routes are being created (there are currently 500 different domestic airways in operation), new airports built, and faster flying schedules are aimed at accelerating air traffic.

Military aircraft production in Russia is considered by the U. S. Air Force to be twelve times ours. This means from 6000 to 12,000 military aircraft a year, possibly more, including some 500 long-range four-motor bombers and up to 2000 jet fighters. But Soviet bombers do not in any way measure up to ours, in either quantity or quality.

Power production, though gradually increasing over prewar

levels, has not yet reached the halfway mark on the schedule set for 1950. Even if the 82,000,000,000 kilowatt-hour 1950 figure is attained, it will still be far behind our estimated production of 285,000,000,000 for that year.

Construction has not even attempted to meet the need. Housing conditions are the worst in Soviet history. Of the 25,000,000 persons made homeless during the war, only 10,000,000 have been adequately rehoused since 1943. The rest, although removed from dugouts, are still living in makeshift shelters or jammed into small quarters with other families. The five-year plan goal, which calls for the construction of 1,000,000 new homes, is just about equal to our own figure for the year 1948 alone. The Soviet goal will probably not even match population increases, let alone take care of existing needs. Furthermore, it will be something of a miracle if the plan comes anywhere near achievement. Moscow building repairs were seventy per cent short of the 1947 goal; building material production is behind schedule; and industrial plans and public buildings are getting priority on what materials are available. The housing picture is one of nightmarish congestion and is unquestionably a most important factor in the labor picture, resulting in low productivity, high turnover, and widespread, although not vociferous, dissatisfaction.

The decentralization of industry is a vital part of the over-all plan of Soviet industrial expansion. Huge new centers, aiming at self-sufficiency, are being built in the interior. More than half of Russia's current industrial investment is being poured into such new developments as the one in eastern Siberia which centers about Vladivostok, now an important feeder point to Soviet enterprises in northern Korea and Manchuria. A balanced industrial economy is gradually being established in that area, capable of supporting not only an expanding frontier but also Russia's Far Eastern armies.

In the northwest a great steel center is being built in the Leningrad region to serve that important manufacturing area more effectively. The long-range plan for this installation is to produce by 1960 one tenth of the total iron and steel capacity of the U.S.S.R. The new steel center will use ore from the Kola Peninsula and coal from the Pechora Basin.

In the current five-year plan agriculture takes second priority on labor and materials. Still, progress has been more substantial in agriculture than in industry. This year there has been an enormous output of food, particularly grain. The Russians call 1948 "the decisive agricultural year." Grain production per capita is expected to be several times higher than in western Europe or even the United States.

In 1948 the government committed more than 2,500,000 tons of grain to export, more than in any year since 1932. Much of this is going to Marshall Plan countries in return for machinery. Nearly 20,000,000 acres were added to the tilled areas of the Soviet Union in 1947, and the process is continuing with the recovery of war-damaged acreage in White Russia and the Ukraine. Scientific, mechanized farming has been extended on a large scale.

Consumer goods are running a poor third on the five-year plan list. Production is increasing slowly, but at nowhere near the same rate as in heavy industry. The 1950 cotton textile goal is a mere sixteen per cent higher than in 1940, but it is almost double the 1945 figure. Shoe production at present is scarcely half of what it was in 1940, while an increase of only four per cent above the 1940 figure is scheduled for 1950. The production of woollens and other consumer goods is planned for a similar small increase over prewar levels.

Efforts are being made to improve the situation, but no real shift in emphasis is being effected for fear of jeopardizing the over-all plan for Russia's industrialization. Heavy industry

plants are supposed to turn out consumer goods as a side line. The Stalin Auto Works in Moscow, for example, theoretically manufactures such side lines as spoons, forks, cups, shovels, and hammers. But when pressure for increased heavy production arises, or when power difficulties ensue, it is the consumer items which are put aside.

As I have pointed out, shortages in these items damage labor morale, resulting in absenteeism, high labor turnover, and low labor productivity. Russia's workers are therefore the weakest link in her war potential. Labor force numbers by 1947 were back to prewar levels but the quantity of the workers themselves could in no wise compare with the quality of the many skilled workers who were killed during the war. Older men, women, and boys have filled the ranks, but the comparative level of efficiency is much lower than before the war. Trade schools for boys and girls have been set up as a remedy for the problem. These schools are attempting particularly to train workers for the coal and metallurgical industries and the transport system. Possibly 2,000,000 trainees have been drafted for these schools so far, but it will be several years before their influence is felt in industry.

The strength and weakness of Russia's unbalanced industry, designed to build up her war machine, have placed a handicap on her attempt to produce atomic age weapons. Lacking our unsurpassed high-precision industries, our great numbers of skilled workers and engineers, Russian industry will take many years longer than the five years it took us to build the atom bomb. This despite the fact that the Kremlin's complete control over labor and resources, permitting the marshaling of necessary manpower and material for urgent projects, gives the Russians a real advantage.

By 1960 the Soviet Union hopes to double the 1950 goals of production. This means that if the program is successful industrial output will be three times what it is today. Even

then, however, Soviet industry will be as unbalanced as it is now. Most consumer goods are not even mentioned in the plans for 1960. And where targets are set, they remain very low.

How will Soviet industry compare to ours and that of western Europe by 1960 if Russia's war potential continues to increase at the planned rates? It will still be low. Over-all output will fall short of ours by about twenty to forty per cent in basic industries, and by an incomparably greater margin in consumer goods.

Russia is preparing to meet any military contingency, partially in a belief that the capitalist world led by the United States will attack the U.S.S.R. sooner or later, and partially in order to be prepared to help out a revolutionary development in Europe or China. The United States, too, must and can be prepared for any military contingency.

And yet it is my deepest conviction that war between the two postwar giants is not inevitable. We can avoid war by winning the cold war raging today.

The Russians seem to think that time is on their side. Maybe. But it is also on ours, and to a greater degree than it is on theirs. With time we can build a military machine superior to theirs. But, more important, time will help us to destroy the possibility of another war.

Dynamic and constructive peace is what we must wage with all our energies, armed with the traditions that have made the United States the great country that it is.

Soviet Communism has cast a gauntlet before the democratic nations of the world. We must accept the challenge. Russia has blamed every social evil on the democratic forms of government, and has offered Communism as a panacea. Something more must come from the United States than merely a denunciation of such propaganda. Constructive action at home and in our foreign policies must be our answer. We must not



permit ourselves to be put on the defensive by supporting social and economic conditions or governments which are rotten to the core. Communism screams that revolution is a necessary part of social reform; but we know that democracy can accomplish the same process peacefully. Where social evils fester, there Communism thrives. If we help remove the conditions upon which it grows, we succeed in identifying the peaceable processes of democracy with progress. To expend our energies in attacking Communism, without heeding the ugliness upon which it fattens is to snip at weeds while leaving the roots underground.

At home we must clean our house of racial inequalities and the specter of insecurity. Abroad we must stand ready to give support to practical programs for social reconstruction. We must identify ourselves in each country with the liberal elements representing the democratic values which we prize, and we must give solid cause to these liberal elements to identify their hopes and efforts with the United States.

There is every reason to hope that successful execution of the Marshall Plan will, by its constructive nature, remove the Communist threat in the participating nations. We have it from no less an authority than the late Zhdanov that the Marshall Plan is Communism's enemy. Instead of the bondage of a police state we offer a practical crutch whereby crippled nations may help themselves to their feet and retain their integrity.

A well-integrated Voice of America can and must become a major weapon in the battle for peace. Despite the concentrated Kremlin campaign to instill in the Russians suspicion, fear, and hatred toward the West, they remain in their daily lives among the most responsive and gregarious people in the world. Theirs is a fascinating combination of humble simplicity, intellectual curiosity, and imaginative power. Their interest in the life and ways of other nations is almost childlike in its frank-

ness and not without a tinge of envy. But there is nothing malicious about it. All that envy does to most Russians is to arouse them to a sense of competition without detracting from their fundamental kindness and charm.

Truth is our most powerful ally, and truth about the United States and current events is what the Soviet citizen rarely gets. Russian press reports are calculated to spread fear and distrust of the United States. Soviet news about life in America is carefully selected, exaggerating completely out of proportion the existing social, economic, and racial problems in this country.

The Voice of America is our best way and the only direct way of reaching the Russian people. Factual information coming tirelessly and unceasingly, day after day, from the Voice of America is the best means of combating the insidious web of falsehood in which the Russian people have been enmeshed. Through an estimated 12,000,000 Soviet listeners we could reach a large proportion of the Soviet population—and we must do it.

The people of the United States must not relax their interest in world affairs. We have learned in the last decade that this country cannot live in isolated peace apart from the rest of the world. We know that the social, political, economic, and industrial problems of other nations are our problems as well, and that the co-operation of interdependent nations is a requisite for a peaceful and prosperous world. The American people have achieved a position of leadership which is a responsibility as well as an honor. Failure to live up to this responsibility may spell disaster for us and the rest of the world.

Our responsibility becomes greater when we recognize clearly that the people's revolutions against colonial rulers or corrupt and tyrannical dictators are more the result of America's revolutionary heritage than the result of Kremlin

demagoguery. The United States itself is a product of a great national revolution and the oppressed nations never forget that. Nor do they overlook the fact that the United States and not the Soviet Union provides the great living example of man's dignity, a high standard of living and political liberty.

*Camp Rockywold,  
Ashland, N. H.  
July–September, 1948*



## Appendix

*Text of Cecelia Nelson's letter to the editor of Izvestia, published by the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., and usually referred to as the organ of the Soviet government. The letter was prominently published on page 4, usually devoted to foreign news, under the heading: "Letter to the Editor," on Thursday, April 15, 1948.*

### RESPECTED CITIZEN EDITOR:

Until today I was employed as secretary to the American correspondent Magidoff. Conditions which I describe below have forced me to leave my job and turn to you with this letter.

I was born in the State of Michigan, U.S.A., grew up there and graduated from a pedagogical institute. I have been living in the Soviet Union the last few years.

My years in the U.S.S.R., intimate contact with Russian people and Soviet reality have convinced me that only in the Soviet Union can simple folk live in real freedom, that only here can people face their future without alarm.

In August 1944, I left the U.S. Embassy in Moscow where I worked in the Press Department, and became secretary to the American correspondent Robert Magidoff.

Having worked with him for a period of several years, I was sure that he was a progressive person and that his attitude toward the Soviet Union was objective. Magidoff is married to a Russian woman and has always met Soviet people with great willingness and interest.

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Recently Magidoff established close ties with members of the offices of the American Military and Naval Attachés, ties which had not been established before. These contacts seemed strange to me because Magidoff had nothing in common with those people. But I did not attach any great significance to this. However, in the last few days certain facts became known to me which have shed a light on Magidoff's behavior, and show clearly that that man, having lived many years in the Soviet Union, is wearing a mask in order to make it easier for himself to conduct criminal work against the Soviet Union.

Since I was Magidoff's secretary, I handled all documents that he was receiving from abroad, as well as his replies to the assignments he was getting.

Along with representing the British *Exchange Telegraph* news agency, and the National Broadcasting Company of America, Robert Magidoff represented during the last period also the American publishing company, the McGraw-Hill Publications.

It was clear from the documents which Magidoff used to receive by mail from the publishing company that it was interested in information on achievements of Soviet science and technology published in Soviet newspapers and scientific-technical journals.

Several days ago, while I was alone in Magidoff's office, I began to look for a letter I happened to be in need of, and involuntarily discovered in Magidoff's papers many documents which had not passed through my hands, and which reached Magidoff through the American Embassy in Moscow.

It is evident from these documents that Magidoff has been systematically receiving from the United States assignments for the collection of espionage information in the U.S.S.R., and that in the McGraw-Hill Publishing House in New York, whose official stationery was used for all these letters, there are some employees who use their employment in that publishing house for purposes of espionage.

In these letters, apart from direct assignments in espionage, there are in some cases even instructions as to how best to make the acquaintance of Soviet persons and best to obtain requisite information.

In a letter from the United States, on McGraw-Hill stationery, dated June 26, 1947, addressed to Magidoff, there are instructions to collect

detailed data about underground installations. The document says directly:

"It is our job to collect the fullest and most complete information on this question. This refers also to all other data that you may gather, which have a direct bearing on this question. Simultaneously we should like to know your sources, if possible. In using the material, however, we shall not refer to names, and there shall be no direct quotations."

This document was supplemented by a questionnaire giving details on the character of the information that was to be collected on underground installations. Among other things, the questionnaire inquired:

"Where are the installations located? What are the strategic dislocation areas? [Areas less vulnerable to bombings, etc.]

"Can defense be secured against poison gases?

"Can defense be secured against radioactive particles?"

In a McGraw-Hill letter from the United States dated June 1947, addressed to Magidoff, there are also detailed instructions on the gathering of information on secret matters. The question is asked in one paragraph: "What research is being conducted in the field of atomic energy (be as specific as possible)?"

A letter dated July 30, 1947, instructs Magidoff to collect information on the Soviet air transport and airdromes. The following is contained in that letter:

"What about air transport? How fast is it growing? Are there any new large airdromes? Are air freight lines on the increase?"

From the copies of Magidoff's reports, which I also found among these documents, he sent his reports, too, not through regular channels, along with his other correspondence, but via the diplomatic mail.

Magidoff, however, apparently took into consideration the fact that part of these reports might appear in the press. Therefore, while sending information via diplomatic pouch, he specifically requested McGraw-Hill to protect him as the source of the information.

Thus, the assignment of November 26, 1947, instructed him to collect detailed data on industrial construction in the U.S.S.R. Magidoff sent his reply through the American Embassy on January 3, 1948. But he attached a note to his report:

"It would be advisable to have the material appear without refer-

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ence to Moscow. But should Moscow be mentioned, do not attribute the origin of the information to me, but create the illusion that the information comes from the New York office."

After I read all these letters, it became clear to me that Magidoff is using his stay as a correspondent in the Soviet Union for espionage purposes, and is conducting intelligence work against the Soviet Union.

These documents, after I digested their contents, shed light on many other things. Now I could see clearly the reasons for the close ties which Magidoff had developed of late with the heads of the offices of the U.S. Military and Naval Attachés.

I consider war mankind's greatest tragedy. The capitalists are preparing for a new war, and the gathering by Magidoff of intelligence data about the U.S.S.R. is undoubtedly part of the dirty work which American capitalists are carrying out in preparation for war.

All this has compelled me to put aside the scruples which were instilled in me and report on the real activity in Moscow of American correspondent Robert Magidoff. In proof of what I have said, I have handed over the documents I have mentioned to the interested Soviet organs.

*Signed*

CECELIA NELSON

*Moscow, April 14, 1948*

*Text of Magidoff's letter to the chief of the Press Department of the Foreign Office.*

April 15, 1948

MR. VASILENKO  
PRESS DEPARTMENT  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MOSCOW, U.S.S.R.

DEAR MR. VASILENKO:

My former secretary, Cecelia Nelson, published a letter in today's issue of *Izvestia* accusing me of intelligence work on behalf of Mc-



Graw-Hill; that I have been receiving instructions from McGraw-Hill, which reached me via the American Embassy; that I have been mailing stories via the diplomatic bag; that I have developed a particular friendship with the American Military and Naval Attachés.

The fact is that in all the twelve years I have worked in the Soviet Union I have received not a single letter, cable, or communication in any other form, from McGraw-Hill or anybody else, except through the open mail. It is true that my mail comes in to me addressed c/o the American Embassy, as the mail to many American citizens abroad, but all of my mail is sent through the open channels.

I have not sent any stories out of Moscow, except through the usual censorship channels.

I have never obtained or tried to obtain any information, except through legitimate channels.

Regarding my contacts with members of the foreign colony in Moscow, including military attachés, I have, naturally, as an American citizen and accredited foreign correspondent, maintained normal social contact with them.

My secretary must have noticed recently that I have been in frequent touch with the office of the American military attaché here, but this was occasioned by my efforts to obtain permission from American military authorities to visit the American zone in Austria which was to be included in my projected trip to central Europe.

The requests that have come in from the New York office of McGraw-Hill were assignments that were sent through the open mail to all McGraw-Hill offices in foreign capitals, not particularly to me, and on matters which are a subject of open public discussion in the United States. Needless to say that I did not even try to fulfill most of the assignments, and those I did were sent through the censorship, and were done on the basis of material available through legitimate channels.

*Yours sincerely,*

ROBERT MACIDOFF

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### *Statement by Ambassador W. B. Smith (re Izvestia story on Robert Magidoff).*

During the more than two years that I have been in Moscow no correspondent has ever sent news stories through the diplomatic pouch, nor would this be permitted. Neither Mr. Magidoff nor any other correspondent has ever received documents or instructions through the American Embassy in Moscow. I talked with Mr. Magidoff this morning and confirmed the fact that the "documents and instructions" referred to in Miss Nelson's letter came through the regular Soviet mails. The news items asked for are quite obviously of a type which in the United States and most other countries are considered newsworthy and are given general newspaper publicity as matters on which the public is entitled to information.

Mr. Magidoff, like other American correspondents in Moscow, has close acquaintance with American Embassy personnel, including the Military and Naval Attachés. There are few Americans here and during recent months, through no desire of our own, our contacts with Soviet citizens have been limited purely to official relations, and we depend on each other for companionship and normal social relations. Mr. Magidoff's relations with our Military and Naval personnel have been entirely of a social nature.

I have insisted and have insured that diplomatic, military and naval personnel of this Mission restrict themselves implicitly and exclusively to legitimate and authorized sources of information. Mr. Magidoff informed me that he considers the allegations made by the Soviet citizen, Miss Nelson, and published in *Izvestia* are entirely false. I can confirm the fact that they are false (in so far as they relate to American Embassy personnel).

Mr. Magidoff also informs me that he is answering these allegations, and I sincerely hope that his answer will be given publicity equal to that accorded his accuser.

I am reporting all the facts and circumstances in the case, together with my statements, as above, to the Department of State in Washington, and I assume that they will be made available to the press of the United States.

*Moscow, April 15, 1948*

*Text of the statement by the New York office of McGraw-Hill World News.*

The espionage charges against Robert Magidoff, the McGraw-Hill *World News* correspondent in Moscow, reportedly made by his secretary, are entirely without foundation.

The charges are based on a normal routine news assignment which was sent to Mr. Magidoff in June of 1947.

The same assignment—which was a worldwide survey designed to determine the effectiveness of underground plants during the recent war—was sent to our correspondents in England, France, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Germany, Austria and Japan.

Our correspondents were able to produce reports from all countries with the exception of Russia. Mr. Magidoff did not send a story. These reports were pieced together in New York into major articles for McGraw-Hill magazines. The purpose in making these surveys was to make a factual report based on the lessons of the last war to American industry on the problems they would have to face if U. S. industry had to go underground. The assignment was inspired purely by the interest of McGraw-Hill industrial readers in this subject.

To date, two of these reports have been published. One entitled, "Can Chemicals Dig In," appeared in the March 1948, issue of *Chemical Engineering*. Another, entitled "If Industry Ever Had to Go Underground," was published in *Factory Management and Maintenance* in March, 1948.

McGraw-Hill publishes 35 magazines in the industrial, technical, business, and scientific field. *World News* is the private foreign news agency supplying these magazines.

There is nothing unusual about the assignment to Moscow. Such assignments are routine. Since 1945, Magidoff has handled many assignments of an industrial and technical nature. On some of them—the *Factory* story is a case in point—Mr. Magidoff did not carry out the assignment because of Soviet censorship regulations.

RUSSELL F. ANDERSON  
EDITOR  
MCGRAW-HILL "WORLD NEWS"

*New York, April 15, 1948*

## APPENDIX

*Text of a TASS (official Soviet news agency) announcement which appeared in papers throughout the Soviet Union, and was broadcast over the radio on April 16, 1948.*

In connection with the publication in *Izvestia* on April 15 of a letter by citizen C. Nelson about the espionage activity of the American correspondent Magidoff in Moscow, Magidoff was called in to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. where he was informed that he must leave the territory of the Soviet Union immediately.













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